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IT'S ALL
HERE AND
IT'S ALL
TRUE

Philadelphia Independent

WHAT IS,
WHAT WAS,
& WHAT
COULD BE

VOLUME ONE, ISSUE NO TWO

SPRING 2002

FIFTY CENTS

THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

In a Gameless Age
We Have an Ageless Game

TIME SHALL NEVER SNUFF
THE ROLLING WOODEN FLAME

The Grandeur & Mystery
of Skee-Ball

BY JONATHAN SHAININ

Skee-Ball is simple. Invented in 1909, the game is a machine-age hybrid of bowling and darts. A Skee-Ball alley consists of a ramp about 15 feet long with an upright target at the far end. The target has seven not-quite concentric rings on it, and you roll a grapefruit-sized wooden ball up the ramp and over a bump at the base of the target, where it hops up into the holes within the target rings that register your score. The largest ring, about a foot in diameter, is worth 20 points. Three six-inch wide rings, worth 30, 40, and 50, lie in a straight line up the middle of the target, with the 30 on the bottom and the 40 directly above it, both within the 20 ring, and the 50 above the 40, just outside the 20. In the upper right and left corners are two small rings—called “bonus pockets” in the business—that score 100; if you miss the 50 or 100 rings, the ball rolls down the face of the target into a semi-circular gutter at its base, worth 10.

Playing Skee-Ball has a tangible physicality to it: stooping over the lane, holding a smoothly worn ball of just the right weight in the palm of your hand, tossing it up the middle of the ramp and into the air, where it caroms off and into the rings. Each quarter buys you nine balls, and as your points accumulate, the machine—operating on a mysterious algorithm set by the individual arcade owner—dispenses a long string of tickets that increase with your score, folding into a larger and larger pile at the base of the lane as one game melts into the next.

At this point, it is suggested that you trade in your tickets for one of a number of carnival-grade prizes available elsewhere in the arcade. Every Skee-Ball establishment prominently displays a few requisite top-shelf items with ridiculous price tags—a stereo or small television for 200,000 tickets, perhaps. Most of your prizes, however, are within the more modest scale of a single day's trip to the lanes: plush stuffed animals or anything made from cheap plastic.

I have never in my life actually exchanged the tickets for the shoddy trinkets to which they are equivalent, preferring to perpetually stow them away (though they are usually lost) as a kind of down payment toward some greater item whose specifics need never be established. I like to think that they signify some kind of future hope; because the things they purchase are by definition without value, tickets are, unlike money, more valuable than the things they buy. The tickets conjure up the image of your next trip to the Skee-Ball venue, and in themselves represent the sum and accretion of all such trips, stowed in a desk-drawer or a shoe-box under your bed. The simple gift of Skee-Ball, essentially unchanged for decades, is its little dream of the past, the tiny intimation of

HERMES BEATS HADES IN TWO-WHEELED RACE

Messengers Stare
Death in the Eye
& Smirk

BY MATTATHIAS SCHWARTZ

The Platt Bridge All-Stars do not understand why I would ever want to write a newspaper story about them.

“It's not some big deal or anything,” insists Joel Peterson, a bicycle messenger who wears the #34 shirt for the All-Stars. “It's kind of a joke that we've taken to heart. I mean...the whole thing is really just a t-shirt.”

His half-hearted denial reminds me of a Green Beret saying, straightfaced, that his elite unit of commando army rangers is “really just a hat.” Is he simply modest, I wonder, or concealing arcane courier secrets?

I'd heard rumors about a gang of outlaw messengers who laughed at death, biked along freeways, and tackled a span of road that the rest of us would only attempt on four wheels. My source identified their leader as



The Platt Bridge All-Stars in their natural habitat.
From left: Acker, Joel, and Jesse.

SKEE-BALL

Patented Apr. 3, 1917.
2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.
1,221,803.

H. JOHNSTON.
GAME APPARATUS.
APPLICATION FILED AUG. 28, 1916.



ON THE PERSISTENCE OF SIMPLE MACHINES

The new crop of inventions are not inventions at all, but rely on accident, ornament, reference, or plagiary for their power. Yesterday's inventions seem newer than ever against this backdrop of mere novelty, reminding us that a few clean lines can hold the heaviest steel and the most jaded imagination in perpetual suspension.

“Acker,” and suggested I arrange to meet the group at a neutral, public location for an interview.

Now here they are on this warm Spring evening, hands folded politely on a Starr Garden Park picnic table. The Platt Bridge All-Star organization has three members: Peterson, 24, Jesse Geller, 21, and Acker, “can't I just be Acker?” 31. The group has a spent a combined 13 years running packages for Philadelphia courier companies. But what sets them apart from

TURN TO ALL STARS, PAGE 9

Mick takes on Mephistopheles

“THEIR SATANIC MAJESTIES REQUEST”

BY NATHANIEL FRIEDMAN

As of yet, mankind has developed but two great kinds of failure. Failure, as we know, can be internal or external; things are screwed up on the inside, or never capture the attention of a willing and eager audience (or both). Apologists try to cause problems by transforming flaw into character, hence the brilliant-but-flawed, the tragically flawed, and the flat-out tragic. But no matter how seductive these categories, they're still just disguises for failure. If nothing else, we should hail the Rolling Stones' *Their Satanic Majesties Request* as one of time's most complicated failures. Although almost everyone agrees that there's something wrong with The Stones' oft-maligned and criminally underplayed 1967 album, it's hard to figure out the exact nature of its shortcomings. Most consider its spooky take on the then-receding Summer of Love a period piece that missed its mark. At the same time, its clanging orchestrations and all-together-now exhortations departed sharply from the band's signature style. In betraying themselves, the Stones seemed bound to misfire.

AND I AWOKE / WAS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE /

MUCH TO MY SURPRISE / WHEN I OPENED MY EYES
 The Stones, whose impending mid-life crisis was as good an excuse as any for some critical soul-searching, seemingly fucked themselves, were fucked, and practically begged to be fucked upon the release of *Satanic Majesties*. People got off on this; between the band's brand name and the current fad for all things phantasmagoric, *Satanic Majesties* was a short-term success. The passage of time and setting in of history have been less kind though, mooring its reputation between perplexity and disdain. Even when seen in a positive light, it's a curiosity: the *Sgt. Pepper's* or *Smile* too crass too fit in with the gang, or the sound of the world's most feral rock 'n roll band lulled into acid-induced drapiness. But few consider the possibility that *Satanic Majesties* isn't about the sixties. The awkwardness of this album might not be the friction between stars and a cultural moment in which they had no place, but the growing pains of a band lurching towards maturity.

The difference between imperfection and failure depends on completion. As a transition,

TURN TO STONES, PAGE 5

Reading was the only amusement I allowed myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolics of any kind. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BLOOD!!!

Center City Couple
Cuts Kids for Kicks

“THAT SOUNDED LIKE A THREAT TO MY
DIVINITY! HE'LL PAY WITH HIS LIFE!”

Their Baby: An Axe
Named Selena.

THEIR GOAL: TO BE “THE FILTHIEST
PEOPLE ALIVE.”

Have the Marbles
lost theirs?

BY ALEX SPENCER

They call themselves Mr. and Mrs. Marbles — “My husband will be home at eight”, “Why, yes, Mrs. Marbles” — but they are not married; far from it. They will faithfully report their wedding date, tell you they renewed their vows on October Nineteenth, Two Thousand One on the posthumous birthday of drag queen Divine, but do not be fooled, honest citizen. They will accost you in a local nightclub — any dark, fashionable dive will do — and flatter you, addressing you by the name of some sexy celebrity you supposedly resemble, enticing you home with them for “cocktails.”

Once there, if you fit their demographic — their tastes run toward gaunt indie-rocker, Jewish or gay boys — they will drug you with whatever concoction they have on hand, strip you naked by force or by flattery, and make you dance and pose for their cameras, their guests or both.

If you're lucky, this is all that will happen.

If you're not, they will take out the axe.

Selena, they call “her”. “Our baby.” Her handle and blade look clean, but make no mistake: Selena has shed and been stained by many a vein. And with her they will slice you, making neat little tears in your goosepimpled flesh, savoring the sight of every red rivulet that streams down your arms, chest and legs, to the sickly sound of techno beats and bloodthirsty cackles, dancing and joking all the while as if pain were a party.

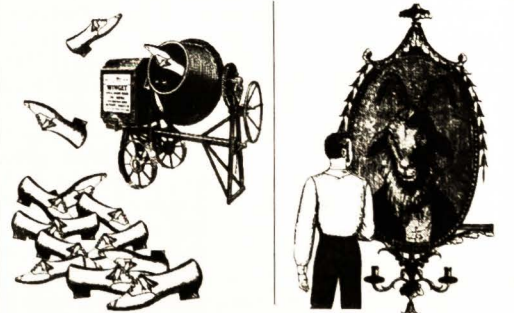
Congratulations. You have just been inducted into the Marbles Museum of Shows, a twisted history of preyed-upon boy-toys who got off on the loving touch of a cold steel blade. Welcome to the dark side.

Raymond and Connie claim that there is nothing sexual about their “shows,” that they are purely for entertainment. “No touching” is the rule. Their only contact with their boys is through Selena, and whatever other cutlery they or their guests have picked out for the night's debauchery.

They are quick to assure the timid that all the blades have been sanitized, disinfected with flame, as though that should be your sole concern. Naturally, the knives are then left to cool. Cauterizing the wounds would expunge the ritual of its prime reward: blood. “It's only a little blubba,” Mr. Marbles innocently persists, batting his eyelashes and dragging out the last syllable. They say their prey are always will-

TURN TO MARBLES, PAGE 8

INSIDE, A FEAST FOR THE EYES & MIND



A detail from A PERPLEXING PUZZLE FOR PRECOCIOUS PUPS
Turn to Page 10, The Page of Wonder

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2: The Editorial & Opinion Page

- THE ANNALS OF FINANCE: A page from Arthur Anderson's playbook.
- AUDREY FERENC visits the new Independence Mall visitors' center.
- GABRIEL M. TROSDOROG, a Philadelphia schoolteacher, reflects on charter schools and Edison.
- RILEY MICHAEL POOLE makes a modest proposal to Microsoft.
- The publisher uses his prerogative to remark on present state of this venture.
- Poetry by M.C. HYLAND & THOMAS J. WALSH

3: The Arts Page

- New fiction by ROSALIE KNIGHT.
- The conclusion of Mr. Shamin's inquiry into Skee-Ball.
- ALEX SPENCER reads the writing on the walls of an abandoned train station.
- THE EDITORS remark on our new newlines.

4: Paper Tigers

- BENJAMIN TITEN reviews *Dreamland*, a book of photographs.
- CARTOONIST JACOB WEINSTEIN examines the work of his Philadelphia colleague Brian Biggs.

5: Sound Advice

- BERNARD JACOBSEN distills the city's classical music scene.
- KEVIN PEARSON crosses the Atlantic to tell us about the So Solid Crew.
- The conclusion of MR. FRIEDMAN's interpretation of *Their Satanic Majesties Request*.

6: The Seasoned Supper

- CHEF SONIA SPECTOR boils down the city's best restaurants to a piquant reduction.
- PATRICK LIETKA chronicles the city's cheese wars.
- THE EDITORS reveal a few of their favorite eateries.

7: Sport & Leisure

- SAM HANDLIN prophesies the future of baseball.
- NATHANIEL FRIEDMAN & JACOB WEINSTEIN devise new “trick plays” to improve the game of football.

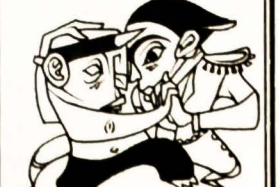
10: The Page of Wonder

- A comic by JACOB LAIBERT.
- Another comic, by JOANNA NEBORSKY.
- A perplexing puzzle for precocious pups, by GABRIELLE TITEN.
- A selection of other illustrations and ephemera, to stimulate the mind and titillate the eye.

11: Enter the Matador

- A comic by JACOB WEINSTEIN. See detail below.

THIS NEWSPAPER CONTAINS:





Established 2001

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NOSTRI MANES SUNT INFANTES.

20 Years Later, Scotch Tastes Better than Milk

The first thing time takes away from any publication is timeliness. Fortunately, circumstances have denied us any immediate hope of entering the silly race for "news," which alters as swiftly as fashion and sours faster than milk. We are a less-than-frequent newspaper, certainly not timely, but, in our finest and vainest moments, timeless. With this in mind, we have implemented a policy of taking three fresh copies of each issue the moment they return from the printer and burying them in an airtight capsule, the location of which will remain secret until Issue 100. We hope that our first issue reads nearly as well today as it did on January 14, and that this issue, too, will please you no less six months or even ten years from now than it does this minute. Otherwise, we would have gladly put off publication for yet another season.

With practice, we may get even faster, perhaps even releasing Issue Three before the end of the year. But that is the future, and, being a newspaper,

our concern is with the present. So to those who inquire when we will permit the next issue of THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT to leave our nest of offices and go flying over the trees and telephone wires, we answer that THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT obeys the same rigorous schedule as The Times of London and The Baffler of Chicago — the leisure and sound discretion of its editors.

Fewer than a hundred days have passed since the release of Issue One, and already you are holding Issue Two of THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT. The city heaped so many laurels upon our humble heads after the stunning debut. Should we not have arranged them into a leafy pillow, and rewarded ourselves with a short nap? Was it folly to produce our sophomore effort so quickly? Dear reader, we leave the verdict in your wise hands.

OPINION

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AS FACTORY

How running a good school differs from running a good business

BY GAUIS M. TICONDEROGA

Everybody was supposed to win with charter schools — students would get a top-notch education and taxpayers could know that it was on somebody else's dime. Backed by former Governor Tom Ridge and former Mayor Ed Rendell, charters were supposed to offer smaller classrooms, state of the art facilities, and well-salaried teachers. The rhetoric was similar to the present debate over Edison. Desperate times require desperate measures, and it seemed like only a for-profit business model could bail out the public schools.

But then, as now, you get what you pay for. Initially, charters had no problem securing help from philanthropists and corporations to fund their ambitious programs. But they've had less luck spending the money wisely. In the recent economic downturn, with their budgets drained or dwindling, many charters have proven themselves utterly unprepared to handle the complex realities of urban education.

When a student enrolls in a Philadelphia charter school, she brings \$5,700 in funding with her. For the schools, a student is the most indispensable commodity — a steady source of income. Yet prizing students in this way doesn't always add up to a good education. In my experience teaching in a charter school, I've seen students with severe disciplinary problems, students who would have been kicked out of any public school, tolerated because of the money they bring in. Instead of really disciplining a student who has had an altercation with a teacher, some charter schools prefer to fire the teacher. In order to improve their margins, charters have

cut spending on curriculum and materials and have increased student enrollment. The promised panacea has given way to neighborhood-school sized classes and a suspension on purchasing new materials and books. One of my colleagues doesn't even have a place to sit in her classroom, as there are only enough desks for the students.

We must look at the track record of charter schools when examining the future of the Philadelphia School System and the coming privatization by Edison. Charters tried to use the business model to save public education, and from where this teacher sits, most have failed. Many of the companies who run charters are inexperienced in education, and their schools lack the infrastructure for everything from handling behavioral or psychological problems to generating a complete curriculum. Services for special-needs students, like speech therapy or behavioral monitoring, are built into public school budgets, but charters have to pay for those services themselves, straining their supplies and maintenance budgets. Kids who have nothing need everything — small classes, support services, after-school programs — and privatized schools haven't delivered.

If things don't work out, Edison can always take their check, close-up shop and roll on to the next desperate City Council. The tattered safety net of public schools would still be there, left behind to pick up the pieces of yet another failed quick fix.

Gaius M. Ticonderoga teaches at a Philadelphia charter school. To protect his position, he requested that we publish his opinion under a pseudonym.

RING THE BELL & EAT AT JOE'S

Independence Mall gets a gaudy new kiosk

BY AUDREY FERENGE

The new Independence Visitor Center is supposed to herald the renaissance of Independence Mall, and usher Philadelphia into a new age of tourism. The building capitalizes on the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, which, despite the jingoist overtones presently thrown across all Americana, remains two of the best symbolic landmarks in the vacation-as-a-learning experience genre.

All this is as it should be. We ought to visit tangible reminders of our nation's history, and those reminders ought to have serviceable facilities to receive us. But in addition to serving as a guide and starting point for touring the monument, the \$38 million Center tries to encourage visitors to spend their time and money throughout downtown.

The building's high-ceilinged entrance opens up into a cavernous hangar-like space, broken up by several obliquely angled walls, each covered with dioramas, neighborhood maps, and other colorful displays. Sprightly volunteers proffer pamphlets and answer questions. Slick dinner and event reservation terminals and a coffee bar give the space a cosmopolitan and unmistakably commercial feel. Most everything is shiny. The maze of neighborhood displays weaves its way from Old to New, leading you into a small theater to watch a short film showcasing what today's Philadelphia has to offer. What the film itself offers is an enticing montage of Center City restaurants (the Continental is chief among those featured), as well as sunny footage of parades, outdoor markets, kids jumping rope, and other upbeat signs of life in the neighborhoods.

Should a national park, funded, in part, by pub-

lic money, show a film to visitors that devotes more attention to nearby restaurants than any actual park attraction? Well, maybe. A lively restaurant scene draws tourists and perhaps even makes them want to come back. Tourists bring in revenue, and revenue benefits the city, its businesses, and by extension, all of its residents. Increased cash flow from tourism makes improvements like public art, historic architecture subsidies, and city-funded clean-up worth the money.

Then again, that doesn't put Center City's watering holes on par with a national treasure. Nor can every Philadelphian afford to join the ostentatious and seared tuna crowd for a night on the town. Many live in neighborhoods far away from tourist dollars. The tourist money that does reach these communities usually comes in the form of paychecks for commuting workers who wash the dishes, pick up the trash, and carry the luggage to keep Center City's fun machines running. These jobs tend pay at or just above minimum wage, have few chances for advancement, and depend on a robust national economy to keep the tourists rolling in and the whole enterprise afloat. An army of bellhops, busboys and carriage drivers will help feed many families in the short-term, but it is not a sound economic foundation for a city looking to rebuild.

Now that the city has finally given the Liberty Bell complex the facelift it has long deserved, perhaps we ought to consider whether the funding is coming out of the right pocket, and who will really benefit from an increase in Center City tourism. It's time to build destinations in the neighborhoods that need it most.

LETTERS

A MODEST PROPOSAL

To the Editor:

I study political science at a nearby university. Two years ago, in the Spring of 2000, Microsoft came to recruit on our campus. That week, I found the following coming out of a public printer in the library. I thought you might want to publish it now as a relic of that bygone age of high expectations. As this is a found document, I have kept all the author's idiosyncratic spelling and punctuation intact to preserve its authenticity for your readers.

JACQUELINE SCANLON

RED

A PROPOSAL TO MICROSOFT
BY RILEY MICHAEL POOLE

In 1967, a few short months after the summer of love, a magazine was launched which transformed a generation. *Rolling Stone* relegated tedious trade magazines to dusty shelves, by tapping into all that was youthful and rebelliousness in the '60s. In the 1980's MTV was launched, and new life was breathed into a stagnant music industry. The story is clear, new media ignore youth to their own peril. If you turn your back on the younger generation, if you try to them feed the trash you will be forever stuck in disconnect. You leave yourself open to some upstart who can come in and dominate the new medium. Microsoft knows as well as I do that a company fighting for web dominance ignores 18-25 year olds, heck, 13 to 20 year olds only at the risk of hazard.

Look on around the web...do you see an MTV? Do you see a single site which catches the imagination of today's young? People spend a hours on the web bouncing from ESPN.com to Yahoo to their Hotmail accounts to a messenger service to many different sites. Older generations may tune into the financial and general news, but there is absolutely nothing which engages the young.

Imagine a site which engages. Young people would go to this site and spend hours there -- every week -- perhaps every day. Let your mind run free, and visualize the following...

LOAD: WWW.RED.MSN.COM
An insane shockwave animation comes to life, and is accompanied by music from a new hip song. People log in just to see our introduction because every single day our introduction is more mindblowing. Our page comes up, and immediately loads up CHANNEL RED on Real Player. This multimedia station runs on leading edge technology, and is fully integrated onto the site. The content is boundless: mirroring and enhancing the written word on the site.

Red seeks to utilize the web to bursting point. Don't think of it as a web site, but instead as a web complex which includes:

-CHANNEL RED (of course!)
-Gritty, hard hitting articles on Music, Film, Sex, Fashion, Love, Lust, Culture. Sport written by young people for young people.

-ICQ
-Chat rooms, bulletin boards, and all the other trappings of E-Communities.

-Sales links to everything book, CD, location, party, concert, piece of clothing mentioned anywhere in the site.

-Hotmail access
EVERY SINGLE THING ON RED HAS IMPACT.
EVERYTHING IS INTERACTIVE.

BLANDNESS IS NOT TOLERATED.
CHANNEL RED IS:

A web station playing pop/dance/hip-hop/rock/grunge music, with the hippest WJs around. Red displaces MTV just as MTV displaced *Rolling Stone* -- Red will not cover the trends but will define them.

Maybe there is a web cam, and our WJs spin their magic in luxury settings filled with comfy couches and their trendy friends lounging around. Perhaps, there are web cams all over the country or world. University of Michigan main campus, South Central, Manoa, Tiananmen Square, Club Life in NYC...the possibilities are endless.

Roving reporters can hit the hot spots, find music idols and plunge them straight into snap 30 second interviews. We define the trends remember -- nobody turns us down.

There will always be new and innovative shows...There will be windows which constantly scroll comments responding to our web cast. There will be live sets by both big acts of the present and big names of the future.

Channel Red will be fully integrated into the Red site. The name of the song can be constantly listed on the top of the page, people can click on the link and purchase the CD with a single click.

WHY ARE PEOPLE SO ADDICTED TO RED?
Red is alive. Red is always changing. Red is fully interactive.

From the Shockwave introduction to Channel Red, it is constantly evolving and blurring the boundaries between different medium. People can send real time comments through their favorite WJs. WJs can tell people about this excellent club they partied at in New York and people can sign up for the guest list there.

The communities are not amorphous, but instead are linked to the character and culture of the site. Most 20 year olds avoid chat rooms like the plague because there are so few cool people there. As Red develops, the aim is to make it the place where young people meet on the web. We can add incentives to regular participation. We can throw exclusive parties in major markets where only people who have logged in twice a week can attend. We will be so damn cool, that people will die to come to these parties. We connect the virtual with the physical as much as possible, to give Red a REAL PRESENCE.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, Red will be staffed by incredible, intelligent, stylish, fun, insightful young people, who can tap into their peers. *Rolling Stone* was incredible precisely because it used this formula, MTV did the same. Imagine the energy of the staff as they embark upon this incredible path breaking venture, and you know this energy will be conveyed in the quality of their work.

MICROSOFT AND RED
Imagine if Red and ICQ were interwoven. With Microsoft Explorer, loading Red will bring up your buddy list in the top corner. You know which of your friends are online, and can send them a message without ever leaving the Red site. If you turn your back on the most out of Red they will have to use the Microsoft explorer...this could have some advantages, heh?

There can be a hotmail login on the border. If someone just want to see their new messages, they can login and have their new messages displayed on the margin, and seen through the Red frame. If they want to go over the Hotmail they can do that through the Red frame.

A WJ conducts an interview with Mariah Carey who raves about what a blast she had in the Virgin Islands. At that moment at the top of the screen, a link appears:

To find the cheapest ticket to the Virgin Islands click here.

One click later, the young Red lover is in Microsoft Expedia with pricing information for a return ticket from home to the Virgin Islands. Not only that, but any article written about Virgin Islands is hyperlinked, so people can get even more hooked!

We do a live cast (much hyped of course) involving the latest fashion line from some trendy clothing store or label. As the models prance and pose you can simultaneously view the clothes in 3-D or zoom (much as BOO.com is planning) and with one click purchase it. The fashion line remains live for a month as then is replaced with a new cast. Damn, if we're ambitious we can have a Red clothing line. The point is that by fusing entertainment with sales, the possibilities are endless.

WHY RED WILL SUCCEED...
In the months leading up to its launch, RED will be hyped in overdrive on national TV. Microsoft will use all of its marketing magic to create a buzz.

When it goes live, it will be covered by major media and attended by stars. People will sit by their computers, waiting for the moment we go live and they will be blown away by what they see.

RED will always be high impact. High impact visuals constantly shifting under the cursor, engaging audio, and gripping articles. The ICQ will always be running, so people can go back and forth and the chat rooms will be the cool place to hang out.

Linked to web sales outlets, people will have access to the coolest stuff at the click of a mouse. Consumer impulses can be sated instantly.

ME! This project is TOTALLY dependent on the sort of person who leads it. You need someone who is intelligent, daring, and insightful. You need someone who is a strong leader without a big ego. You need someone with the taste and vision to pull this off. This little brief may have been written in an afternoon, but you get the idea about the ideas and vision which I have. RED is still in its embryonic stages, and has a long way to go but it will only get better.

YOU! Microsoft has a commitment to MSN and content based sites. You are engaged in a battle for market share, and would not scoff at something which could hand you a big piece of an important demographic. Don't be turned off by the lack of form or structure. There is deliberation. I want you to get caught up with the energy, and the basic principles. Fly me out to talk some more, and you will quickly see that I am the sort of person who in this insane age can run a crazy overly ambitious project like this.

ON ISSUE ONE

To the Editors:

I have grown tired of the predictability that governs Philly's most widely heralded periodicals. Knight-Ridder houses a vast array of seasoned journalists who paint the canvas by which we are perceived both locally and nationally. The portrait offered is often cold and impersonal, valuing tragedy and loss over the triumphs of the human spirit. Those triumphs are often found lurking in small print amidst the back alleys of page 15. I feel that a city's identity is being misplaced.

My car was parked at a familiar meter that borders the west side of the Free Library. As I completed my

trek, I stopped to pick up a newspaper. My attention was immediately drawn to a baby-blue newsbox that rested humbly at the far end of the usual suspects (i.e. Daily News, Metro, Employment Guide). Upon closer inspection the only print I could find on the machine was a crudely stenciled 50-cent moniker etched across the front lip. I peered into the darkened window and barely made out the words "Philadelphia Independent" on the front page. I had no idea what it was. There was no self-promoting advertisement or logo on either side of the machine. Still, it called out to me. I had to have it.

I rediscovered journalists who write simply out of love for their craft. I found a vehicle that allowed them to do so without forcing them to succumb to corporate agendas or back door sponsorship. There were underground ideals searching for an audience they knew existed. It was real. The heart of a city was beating through its veins. May it long endure.

ROBERT HILL

To the Editors:

I think Philly is one of the nation's great secrets -- an unpolished, scruffy gem that requires a little more of a sense of humor, and sense of the absurd, to appreciate. I love walking the streets of the city for hours at a time, wandering the side streets of the slowly emerging loft district east of Broad and north of Vine, envisioning it full of people in ten years. We have everything here and our beauty and our curse is that we only rarely appreciate it -- the beauty being that there are too busy just living to worry about comparisons and the curse being that others worry too much about New York, Washington and Boston, cities already lost to the mad gentrification that has pushed anyone making less than a hundred grand a year from their downtowns. Philadelphia wants to get there, but it shouldn't.

PATRICK LIEDTKA

To the Editors:

Interesting newspaper. I like people on a mission.

WILL MCNAUL

To the Editors:

During these two years of my life in Philadelphia I feel as if my eyes and ears have become finely tuned to the subtleties of the city, haunting and strange, tender ghosts and wandering brick-colored poets. I continue, however, to be in perpetually contemptible awe of the multitudes of citizens that bash this town. I listen and shake my head, watching their lips spittle and flap like thick, soppy towels. How could they drive past the Divine Lorraine and not feel like sinking beneath its surfaces just to smell the musty air of a palace once relegated to the explosive tempers and passions of a world beautiful with sun-strokes across Broad Street's encompassing wind of tar?

Not to mention Little Pete's. Has anyone ever seen a more eclectic audition of characters? I think not. I first encountered THE INDEPENDENT while attending a screening of Martin Scorsese's early films at the Moore College of Art and Design. Two guys, whose names I cannot recall, came up and asked my friends and me if we were interested in purchasing an issue. Excitedly I handed over my 50 cents. Perhaps I had found something real and honest in a world of increasingly dishonest intentions.

After having read your first issue, I have to say that I admire its spirit immensely. There is a genuine ambition and honesty to your uncompromising attempt to explore the hidden truths that abound in the in-between places of a city that needs such a probing now more than ever before.

NICHOLAS A DIULIO

To the Editors:

This says, "Life is HERE, not just in the Capitol Building, or in the Gaza Strip, or at ground zero." I also enjoyed the anachronistic look, by which I mean not only "old" but conflating things from various times. This says to me, "While we are dissatisfied with modern life, we are not reactionaries. We are looking to build a new machine, but we rummaged through old parts to find what we needed." I imagine the content will get even better--you put out a great new publication, got it distributed heavily, and now a new bunch of talented writers will take notice and want to submit.

My complaints are all fairly minor, and I imagine I won't be the only one to raise them. The paper is huge. Too big for its own good. The size makes it awkward to read, especially on a bus, or at a table in a coffeshop, or, really, anywhere.

JOSH SALTZMAN

To the Editors:

Once memorized the speech made at Caesar's burial, in Latin, by accident, because my friend had to and kept on saying it. It started like this, semi-phonetically, as I never saw it written down and don't actually speak Latin:

Swayway marymagnon tibantiboose. Wasted potential. Anyhoo, similarly, 9-ball billiards, chess, and cock-fighting would be of particular interest to me, as a Filipino.

ANDREW ROMERO

THE POETS' CORNER

punctuation

cummings, commatose
saw hands in rain,
curses in flowers,
body parts in car parts.

comings and goings
on paper,
like crossword answers
shimmied from their squares

cummings, e.g., a canvas,
words painting fireworks,
an illuminating palette olio
of Bathers and dali clocks.

- THOMAS J. WALSH

May 17, 1993

(with apologies & thanks to Jim Simmerman)

His voice dropped like a stone in freezing water
His ears were filled out to the lobes with wax.
Across the lawn mower's attenuated growl
I'm wearing my heart like a crown
was his aching antiphon.
Evening calm as an avalanche
wrapped up his Baintree yard.

Lizzette McFay had rolled over on
her towel fifty-seven times between 12:18
and 3:41 that afternoon in the Coppertone sun
at Wollaston Beach. He was too old to watch her
lick melted soft-serve from her wrist.

The spring air tasted like rainbow sherbert
& was thick as yogurt around his sagging skin.
The neighborhood dogs barked out arias,
smelling last night's dinner sauteing in trashcans
all up and down the street.
Dogwoods dressed in pink of the insides of shells
You could hear dandelions ferment into wine.

The sun refused to set on Walter Coombe,
superglued to the sky like a joke quarter.
The rabid cat of summer lurked around as evening fell,
shaking bruised petals down from magnolias
with its enormous paws.

He walked up the swamp maple next to the violet sky
while little Christy Hyland next door
harvested her mother's flowerbed,
as she will harvest hothouse bougainvillea
and bleeding heart twenty years into the future
in singing greenhouses far as Tuscaloosa.
The hands are made for silence, her father had said.

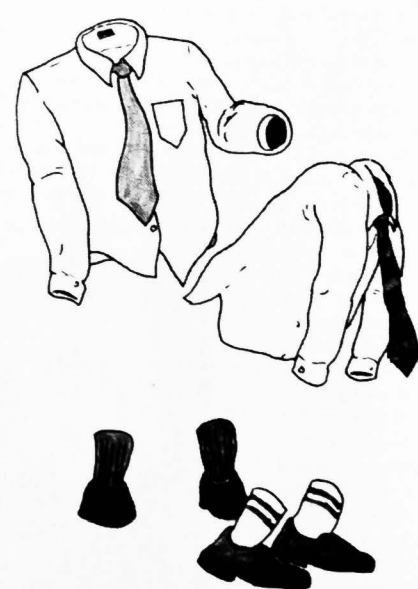
Lizzette and her boyfriend never ate ice cream
because their hands were bony and grasping and young.
On the beach at night they tore each other's clothes
& tasted the bright snare drumbeat of half-innocent skin.

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE

The dogwoods are hurrying to bed.
The stone of Walter's voice wears smooth
as the albino moon.

- M.C. HYLAND

FROM THE ANNALS OF FINANCE.



In light of the recent Enron debacle, we found this detail from page 231 of the Arthur Anderson Manual of Standard Accounting Practices and Procedures to be an absolute outrage. We remain unclear as to whether the two suits represent the auditor, the client, or some bizarre amalgam of both.

PICTURE BY SAM DELACROIX
WORDS BY THE EDITORS

FICTION

The Ordinary
An Excerpt

BY ROSALIE KNECHT

I sat thinking about six o'clock on an ordinary morning, about waking up not knowing what day it is. I sat thinking behind him, while he watched the street and I watched the light along the side of his face. The houses got thicker on both sides of the street. We passed the stop where I usually got off, and I smiled to see it go.

Ten minutes passed, twenty. The scene opening toward me was getting more electric, bigger and louder and hotter. I always carried a camera with me, as a charm against time; I took it out of my pocket and snapped a picture of a stop where a woman stood with a bag of groceries and the blessing of a cigarette. We slid past busier sidewalks. The shadows of the buildings were deeper and the sun on high windows shone harder. My eyes swallowed blocks. We were moving toward the city.

The bus stopped again, on a corner where the city wrapped around, humming. The boy got up and I followed.

FACT



CENTER OF THE EARTH

Alone in the Shadows Stands Another Kind of Fame
A Look at the Realms Beneath the Street. First in a Series.

BY ALEX SPENCER WITH MATTATHIAS SCHWARTZ

In classic video games and children's books there are hidden worlds, invisible realms inches from our own which you need only slide a brick or turn a statue's head to enter.

This is easiest to imagine in the city; a labyrinth of passageways, tunnels, air vents and crawl spaces, all leading to who-knows-where and connecting to heaven-knows-what hidden, unblueprinted chambers. In the interests of enlivening our readers' youthful imaginations, three of THE INDEPENDENT's primary staffers followed a veteran guide into just such a buried treasure.

We left the last car of our train, glancing towards the turnstiles to see if anyone was watching. No one was, and our guide began to jog. We followed, down a tiled hallway like any other in the SEPTA system but for the fact that it led to a dead station. There was nobody waiting to board, nobody in the booth selling tokens; only a heavy smattering of stickers, scum and various dyes applied by felt tip, brush or nozzle. This was not the Wall, but we were on our way.

Our guide had promised us that the trains didn't run on Sundays, so we jumped down onto the tracks with him, careful to step over the buzzing third rail, and walked off into the dark. In blackness we felt our way along the troughs and peaks of the ridged wall. I tried to imagine, if a train were to come through and catch us here in its path, how safely our bodies could fit into these cement grooves, how close the cars would come to our squinting eyes, how great the vacuum pulling us inwards. The engineers are not above blasting the horn as they pass by invaders, I'm told, a deafening prospect, but that's why those who know come only after midnight or on Sundays.

Soon enough we saw light ahead, and made our way up the steps and onto the platform, which after stumbling along like rats in the darkness felt like being on stage, the halogen bulbs were so blinding.

And so we found ourselves one Sunday morning hidden from the sun's pervasive gaze, buried beneath building, sidewalk and streetcar alike, trapped under rain-gutter grates and routes of escape long boarded over or cemented shut, at one of the city's graffiti Walls of Fame, a transit depot that went from being a portal between points to a destination unto itself for every sharp young marksman with a can of paint and something to prove.

Graffiti has always been a bit of a contradiction; a personal statement in the most public place possible. Also, the rules of the playground seemed to be somewhat set against themselves; i.e. make the hugest, most ornate, decorative, colorful, logic-bending sort of signature, but only in a place where you

obviously weren't supposed to be and therefore had to finish quickly.

So to the graf writers who first discovered them and realized their potential, the abandoned subway stops now called Walls of Fame must've seemed as fortuitous a find as the treasure ship of One-Eyed Willie. Here was a place where one could take all the time in the world, practically, coming back night after night if necessary, to create the ultimate show-off pieces in a space that was even still a risk, still an adrenaline farm and a no-trespassing zone.

This particular one, regarded widely as the premier Wall Of Fame, had even been kept brightly lit thanks to an electrical oversight in SEPTA's maintenance budget. So here was a long, football field-length, glaringly luminous tiled cave — starkly contrasted against the blackness on either side of it — under the streets just begging to be covered in the most elaborate of cave paintings.

The Walls of Fame are strong evidence that not all graffiti writers want name recognition from the public as daring vandals. Here some are content to share their work with a small circle, making a canvas of that which has already been cast aside. It is the most defiant kind of art, done on a grand scale with no hope of fame or reward, on a stolen canvas over the works of peers, knowing full well that what you finish tonight will probably be painted over before your next visit. I recall some words hastily scrawled on an interior wall of the Old Navy Home: "This way at least God will know our names."

A photographer friend once climbed up into a watchtower in an old factory and found a card table covered with fresh cigarette butts and half-filled bottles of beer. Somebody had reclaimed that lost space first, and was regularly using it for a new purpose. We left the station with a similar sense of double trespass, imagining the station's first occupants decades ago, and wondering when its more recent ones were due to return.



Descriptions and full stories behind this and other local subterranean delights will commence serially starting next issue, spearheaded and hosted by your personal Geraldo for this titanium expose, Mr. A. Grant Spencer. Comments & questions should be addressed to alex@phindie.com

More Fun than Death or Taxes

SKEE-BALL, from page 1

another time, and the tickets suggest, similarly, something bigger than themselves. To reduce them to a mere medium of exchange is to efface their charm completely.

Skee-Ball has its roots in the carnival and the midway, where you once paid an attendant for your nine balls, just like at the ring toss, and he provided you with a prize for your score. By the 1960s, the game was making its home within indoor arcades, some of which perhaps furnished prizes for high scores. But the addition of the automated ticket dispenser in 1967, I think, severed the last of Skee-Ball's ties to the midway; it was now fully domesticated, brought indoors and away from the hurly-burly of the carnival to be a self-sufficient arcade entertainment. The tickets, in their own way, remain a reminder of this evolution: in some states the machines are prohibited by law from dispensing them, as they apparently still bear the taint of gambling and other vices unknown.

The midway itself was a byproduct of the World's Fairs of the late 19th century; colossal exhibitions that were civic paeans to industrial progress and invention. At the first of the major American fairs, the Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia in 1876, the organizers banned low entertainments from the fairgrounds—today's Fairmount park—but they were helpless to stop the emergence of the "Centennial City" directly across the street—also known as "Shantytown" or "Dinkytown"—where, according to David Nasaw's history of the amusement era, "a small army of hustlers, showmen, saloon keepers, and performers provided fairgoers with a taste of peanuts, beer and sideshow attractions" (including learned pigs, a five-legged cow, and a 602-pound far lady). When the fair returned to Chicago in 1893, the Midway Plaisance, as it was called, had formally become a part of the exhibition, but was segregated and kept carefully distinct from the manicured architecture and stately, educational exhibits of the fair proper.

The World's Fairs were the site of a then-unprecedented conglomeration of people in the modern age. Millions of tourists and locals streamed through their gates to be cultured, educated, and edified. Though they embodied, in some sense, a Victorian sensibility, they were themselves the product of a world being rapidly modernized, and of a new ease of travel and new vacation time for white-collar workers, whose numbers were increasing. The midway harnessed this great swell of humanity towards an entirely different civic project, one whose explicitly commercial purposes hardly detract from its democratic achievements. They gave rise to an industry of amusement, to traveling carnivals and to Coney Island and its progeny of urban

amusement parks, one of which was Willow Grove just outside Philadelphia. Easily within reach of new electric trolleys, these parks brought amusement within the means of the masses—you could travel to Coney Island for a nickel. As John Kasson observes in his excellent history of Coney Island, *Amusing the Million*, Coney and other "laboratories of the new mass culture" revised the long-held relations in entertainment between observers and participants, transforming the customer from passive spectator into a part of the amusement itself. It would not be long before this experiment—with the civic and commercial seemingly in equal balance—faded, but tattered pieces of its legacy remain, and Skee-Ball is one of them.

It seems that very little is known—to my great disappointment—about Skee-Ball's progenitor, Jonathan Dickenson Estes, though he figures prominently in accounts of the game's history. Estes, a Princeton graduate whose father was the proprietor, appropriately enough, of a Philadelphia lumber-yard, conceived the game he originally called "Box-Ball" in 1909 amid what we're told was a nationwide obsession with bowling. The definitive source of Skee-Ball history, a three-page computer printout from Skee-Ball, Inc., is of dubious historical accuracy, though perhaps no less so than any corporation's autobiography. It suggests that Estes patented "Box-Ball" but neither marketed nor sold it. A search at the Patent and Trademark office digital archive failed to turn up Estes' original patent, though it did unearth a 1916 patent assigned to the "J D Este Company" of Philadelphia for a coin-operated Skee-Ball machine. While Estes' (or Este's) role appears to have been vague, if decisive, it turns out that "Box-Ball" was hardly an anomaly in the era of its invention. The patent archive—which has an entire category of classification devoted to Skee-Ball and similar amusements—houses at least 10 or 15 contraptions that involve rolling balls, ramps, targets, and the like, dating from between 1900 and 1920.

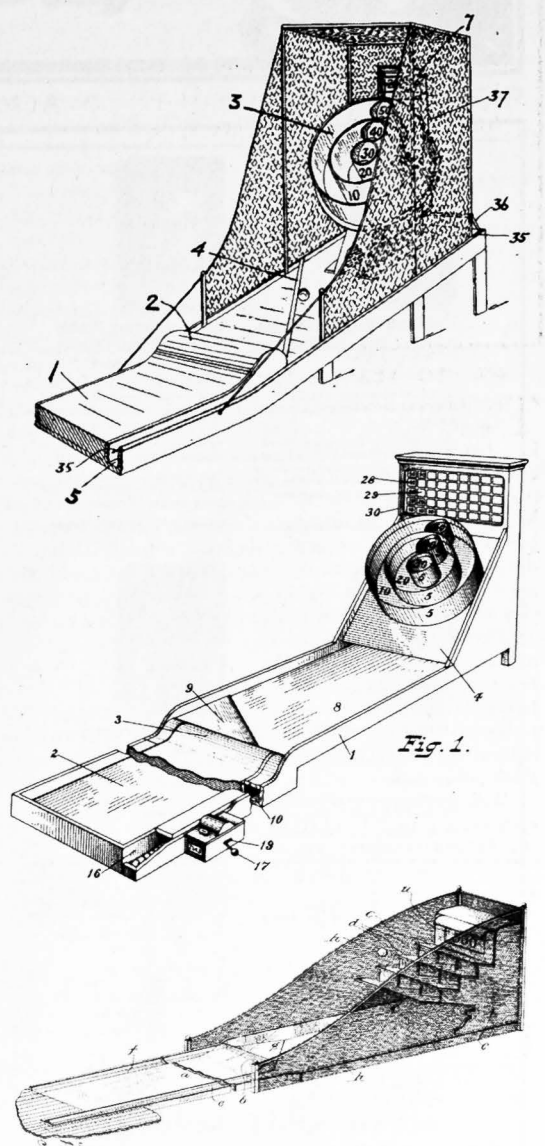
Skee-Ball, Inc.'s timeline indicates that the game's first commercial appearance came five years later, when a Coney Island entrepreneur named Maurice Piesen began to sell the lanes to outdoor amusement companies. Reflecting the game's derivation from bowling, the lanes at this point were nearly 40 feet long, and were manned by attendants. (This latter impression is confirmed by the 1916 patent application that cites the benefits of replacing an attendant with the coin-op model.) In 1928, Piesen supposedly shortened the lanes to 14 feet, and according to timeline lore, this is when the game took off (this development is narrated with a curious rhetoric of civil rights, suggesting that the game was thus democratized to allow "women, children, and the elder-

ly" to partake of its glories). Clearly a born promoter, Piesen organized a national Skee-Ball tournament four years later in Atlantic City. The timeline calls it the "first," but I suspect somehow it was also the last.

It was a hope to fill in this spotty history that brought us to Chalfont, Pennsylvania, a sleepy half-town an hour north of Philadelphia, where an anonymous industrial park houses the factory and world headquarters of Skee-Ball, Inc., keepers of the rolling wooden flame. There, we imagined a trove of information about Skee-Ball's long and complex evolution from midway diversion to arcade diversion, illuminated by endless anecdotes about things like great Skee-Ball tournaments and their legendary champions, the Skee-Ball frenzy that gripped the West Coast in '51, and so on. Instead, we got the timeline, a tour, and some mugs with the company logo on them. We found that Skee-Ball itself has been modernized, with the addition of neon colors, faux-edgy graphics, and facile new names—Skee-Ball Lightning and, sadly, Skee-Ball X-Treme. No doubt re-engineered with the whims of a fickle, attention-span starved MTV generation in mind, the two are identical to the original model but considerably less attractive. I think they also make different noises, and "Lightning" is the site of tremendous score inflation, such that the 50 is 50,000. The necessity of these moves eludes me. What I once knew as Skee-Ball is now called Skee-Ball "Classic," no longer sold to individual consumers and manufactured solely for special accounts—like Dave and Buster's—able to purchase in volume. But for all of their debasements, even these brand-new machines possess some special quality derived from Skee-Ball's past, something more than nostalgia but less than history: a certain magic of persistence.

Your modern arcade, while on the whole something of a relic, is slavishly devoted to newness. Perhaps spurred on by competition from rapidly evolving home gaming consoles, the arcade is concerned to showcase one new trick after another, the hottest virtual reality computer graphics and the most outlandish interactive setups, where the player rides a moving skateboard or perhaps a wobbly motorbike. Any good arcade quickly shuffles through fads of the moment, save for a few workhorses from the early 90s that reliably keep the coinage flowing.

This is the context in which the persistence of Skee-Ball, invented nearly a century ago, stands out. Why it persists is only a matter for speculation, though there is no question of the game's potential to entertain and to rake in quarters. But that it persists remains remarkable, for Skee-Ball does not rely on the charity of nostalgia or the prestige of history, like one of those shiny new "Fifties-style" diners or the



Above, the three most attractive proto-Skee-Ball machines, culled from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's digital archive.

Liberty Bell. Skee-Ball is but a modest game, and in some ways, it is most fascinating by virtue of having been passed over by history, and by the transformative effects of time. Now, it is true that many things which to us represent the epitome of modernity in fact date back to the turn of the century or beforehand—the original modernity, if you will. But it is also true that these 19th century innovations that are the foundation of our national entertainment state—from amusement parks to baseball to cinema—today bear only minimal resemblance to their humble beginnings. Each is separated—estranged, in some sense—from its state of birth by a long and layered history, reflecting internal evolutions amid changes in the larger atmosphere of American commercial culture, milestones of events and personalities along the road to the present. Baseball is not 1815 or 2002, it is everything in between. Skee-Ball, on the other hand, has a past but seems to have no history. There are no great moments in the history or development of Skee-Ball, and no great players, epochal competitions, or artistic achievements. The curiosity of

Skee-Ball is not strictly the fact of its invention long ago or its popularity today, but the mystery of the intervening years, of the history ignored and now lost. Hiding in the present, Skee-Ball is the past itself.

Today, the attractions of the golden age of public amusement have been pushed to the margins; the seedy carnival which still rolls into some county fairground yearly is but a blip of nostalgia on the radar of the vast American entertainment-industrial complex. The urban amusements from which Skee-Ball emerged were exported to the suburbs, to shiny and anti-septic Disney theme parks and their innumerable offspring. And where once a civic and collective public amusement culture thrived, today, in the name of urban renewal, our tax money pays to suburbanize our downtowns with an ESPNZone. The humble Skee-Ball machine presents us with a few faint echoes of an earlier age, of a long-lost culture of community recreation and amusement now gone and replaced with a pernicious imitation. In its rings and bells and wooden spheres, its rickety simplicity, is the hidden aura of that lost time.

NOTICE

Regarding THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT's
new newsboxes

We find few sights more disturbing than patches of mass-produced newsboxes swallowing up street corners like a fluorescent fungus, begging passersby for attention, and giving nothing back but armfuls of litter. Newsboxes occupy public space, and they ought to do something to improve it. With this in mind, we have commissioned seven Philadelphia artists to paint THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT's six new newsboxes. All the artists have generously undertaken their commissions for free. Thank you for donating your work to our paper, and our city.

JIM HOUSER

JONATHAN SCHOFF & CARRIE COOK

AARON OSBORN

TIM GOUGH

JESSE GELLER

DAVID KESSLER



ALSO KNOWN AS PAPER LIONS, PAPER BEARS, PAPERDELPHIA, AND THE ESCRITOIRE'S ACCOMPLICE.



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Helen Caldwell

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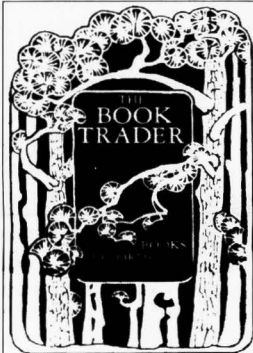
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Carving up the Sky

William Henry Jackson's postcards took 100 years getting here.
The wait was worth it.

Dreamland
Edited by Michael Lesy
The New Press, 1997

BY BENJAMIN TIVEN

Louis J.M. Daguerre, upon perfecting his own early version of photographic process, claimed that his photography "arrested light," as if that were the new medium's greatest trick. But what photography really arrests is *time*, a concept with which, despite the deluge of photographs in modern life, we have yet to become comfortable. Ubiquity has not dulled a photograph's ability to haunt us.

Not every old photograph, or group of them, can push us to reorient our sense of time and vision, but we mark carefully the ones that do. William Henry Jackson, a photographer renowned for his late 19th century landscapes of the American West, is chiefly responsible for just such a collection of images, made at the turn of the twentieth century in partnership with the Detroit Publishing Company. Jackson, after his great success with the Hayden photographic surveys of the frontier West, was contracted to produce views of America, both urban and wild, for reproduction as postcards, magic lantern slides, and dioramas. Armed with the most advanced photographic technology available, Jackson and his crew traveled throughout the country by train, photographing anything scenic, noteworthy, or representative of the new American modernity or prosperity. In one of his images, Manhattan's Woolworth Building, not yet eclipsed as the tallest in the city, glows at night against a dark sky,

the long exposure recording its peak as a single ball of light. Another picture shows a stream of well-dressed summer visitors arriving at the docks on Lake George, NY — the favorite vacation spot for one of Jackson's younger peers, Alfred Stieglitz. At Mt. Lowe, California, where American culture was still a recent immigrant, Jackson conveyed the tremendous space that confronted the settlers and the vast, empty, proto-city grids they drew to try and tame the land.

Jackson's negatives were archived in the Library of Congress for decades, apparently rarely looked at, until historian Michael Lesy collected them into a book, *Dreamland*, published in 1997 by the New Press. All the photographs display a delicate sense of composition, light, and space, are densely packed with information, and demand careful viewing. You will find that they are all ghost filled, *memento mori* like all photographs — according to Susan Sontag, remnants of a time so long dead it seems imaginary. They show us our world before it was ours, leaping into our present, revealing to us what we weren't supposed to see. Faces stare back at us from sunny tennis courts or darkened steel factories, all aware of the camera, pausing to have their lives captured for some unknown reason.

The collection exists somewhere between public and private. On the one hand, the

TURN TO JACKSON, PAGE 9



Government Square, Cincinnati, Ohio

Stendahl On Love

"The whole purpose of this preface is to proclaim that the book which follows it will only be understood by those who have had leisure enough to commit acts of folly...if you have never suffered from that weakness of the strong and are not in the unnatural habit of thinking while you read, this book will rouse your anger against its author, for it will make you suspect that there is a certain kind of happiness you do not know."

Stendahl gives us an inventory of

his anonymous crush — dissecting his own frilly notion of romantic love with the cold skill of a surgeon. We get the four kinds of love (Passionate, Mannered, Physical, Vanity); the seven stages (Admiration, Wish, Hope, Reflection, First Crystallization, Doubt, Second Crystallization) and the 31 articles which formed the 12th Century Code of Love (number one: "The plea of marriage is not a legitimate defence against love"). A bad intoxicant; a better medicine. Recommended for the morning, or the year, after.

I am a Cinematographer

For one Philadelphia cartoonist, the book is the movie.

Dear Julia
By Brian Biggs
Top Shelf Productions, 2000

Frederick and Eloise
By Brian Biggs
Fantagraphics Books, 1993

BY JACOB WEINSTEIN

Storytellers are rare in the world of comics, a field increasingly in love with its own marginality. Most cartoonists tell stories to and for the initiated, but leave little for a general audience. So it's no surprise that Brian Biggs, a cartoonist for whom the reader is a primary concern, stumbled into the comic book world quite accidentally. As he puts it, "I didn't come to comics out of a love of comics. I've always wanted to draw pictures and have people see them, wanted to tell stories and have people read them. Comics never entered my mind as a way to do that. Cinema was where it was at."

It was while studying abroad in Paris that Biggs happened to discover European comics — a generally more erudite and genteel breed. Lacking the funds to shoot a movie, Biggs instead spun a single paragraph into his first comic, *Frederick & Eloise* — a macabre stroll through Frederick's dour relationship with the unseen Eloise. His debut was notable not so much for its Edward Gorey-like pacing (the one cartoonist he is clearly indebted to), but for the rich, gas-lit Parisian atmosphere evoked in his expansive, wide angle pen-and-ink drawings.

The cinematic tone is no mistake, as Biggs is more apt to name check Jim Jarmusch or the Cohen brothers as influences well before any cartoonist. However, in the current comics climate of mini-comic primitivism, Chris Ware traditionalism, and post-RAW 'fine art' nonsense, 'cinematic' has become something of a dirty word — and not without good reason. Though occasionally successful (see Daniel Clowes' *David Boring*), most comics that use cinematic techniques come off as stilted and flat — crude storyboards that do a disservice to both media.

But Biggs clearly has a knack for successfully importing cinematic moves into his comic work, largely because he is attentive to the differences between the two forms. "With any medium you have to find its strength," he says. "One of the things I realized about comics real quickly is that, while I can't control it temporally — I can't do a slow scene except by showing panel after panel — I can give the reader something to go back to. Once you realize how the story is coming together, you go

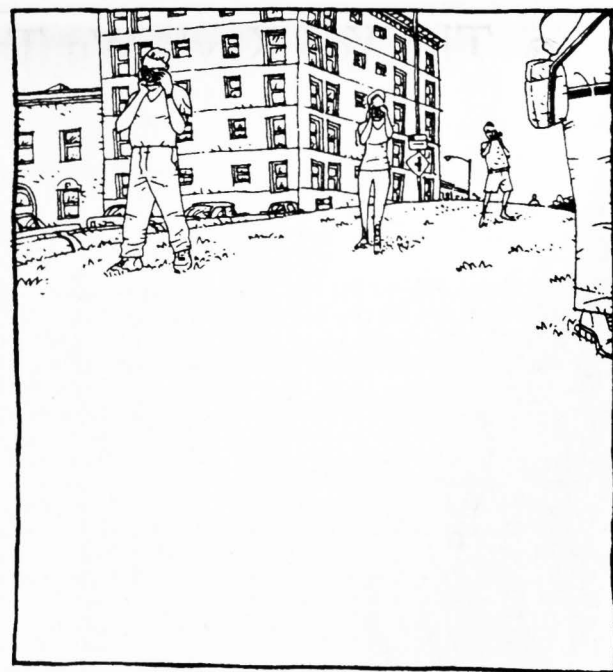
back and those details become more important. In cinema you have to make everything very obvious. With comics the reader is in control."

Biggs uses these techniques most effectively in his second book, *Dear Julia*, which remains his major work to date. The meticulous drawings invite the reader to linger on each panel, and linger they should, for this is a story told in the details: discarded paper airplanes, empty birdcages, the sly, sharply cropped grin of a father driving off the side of a cliff. These pieces slowly fall together into the story of quintessentially unreliable narrator Boyd Solomon. The experimental, collage-like approach to narrative offsets the more literal and nearly photographic drawing style. With unerring draftsmanship, Biggs carves out the sort of light one is more likely to associate with Edward Hopper or Walker Evans than any comic predecessors.

Likewise, *Dear Julia's* narrative tone, somewhere between epistolary confession and lunatic rambling, is inextricably linked to Biggs' cinema-inspired visuals. Essentially every panel is seen through the lens of a camera, with veering perspectives and claustrophobic close-ups that mirror Boyd's own increasing delirium. The neutral camera angle and leisurely two-panel format of *Frederick & Eloise* has here been compressed into a gutterless four-panel page, enabling the same kind of staccato jumps, cuts, and edits (from each touching panel to the next) common in film. Biggs will often set up a page to suggest something out of narrative order, like showing a few panels of Boyd's daydreams, or having symbolic stand-ins enter back into the story, which achieve a kind of jarring, unexpected poignancy.

Biggs counterbalances this cinematic approach with clever narrative flourishes that draw on the comic form. Characters speak in different scripts to suggest different voices, narrative captions taken from Boyd's letters segue back into his actual letter writing, and Boyd's own photographs, as he looks at them, unravel into an extended flashback montage. All these elements actually further the story and never come across as masturbatory formalism.

The use of camera angles to frame and



A panel from Brian Biggs' self-published 1997 mini-comic Interim

determine the panels gives Biggs' work a voyeuristic feel, which he chooses to emphasize rather than avoid, letting it underpin the uncertainty of his work. Voyeurism itself is a recurrent theme that Biggs quickly admits to: "I want to open my door and have masses of strangers to just sit and watch. I need that neighbor upstairs who sings at 4 in the morning. Sure it keeps you awake, but it's fascinating." It is a sentiment echoed on the cover of his beautifully understated wordless mini-comic *Interim*, where perched upon a milk crate, an anonymous figure peers into the slightly cracked window of a nondescript suburban home.

This figure could very well be Biggs himself, peering into the comics world. Though no one could accuse him of merely slumming, he has always been something of a comics outsider. Recently, Biggs has spent the majority of his time pursuing other interests (not surprisingly including a film adaptation of *Dear Julia*). This is clearly comics' loss, as what new work he has published, mostly in various anthologies, shows another leap forward in craft and control of the medium. The new stories are told with rough-hewn brushwork and a sharp, Carver like brevity. The technical precision of his

earlier drawings is pared down, and the camera angles further abstracted, recalling his earliest European influences. And though the economy of his new work is in part due to necessity rather than choice, Biggs may be at his best with these terse stories, each a brief snapshot of his twilight world.

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BIND ME TO THE MAST, MEN. I WANT TO LISTEN!

Rites of Spring

From the Kimmel to the Academy, classical music is in full bloom this season.

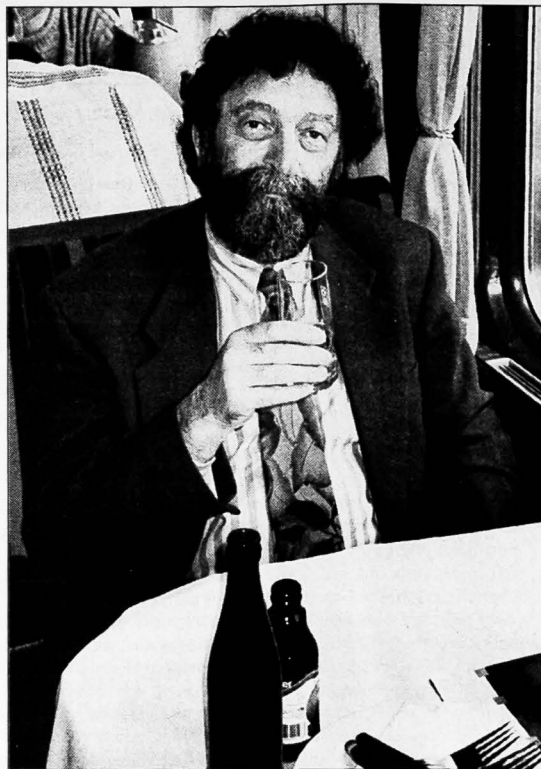
BY BERNARD JACOBSON

April 2002 is a particularly apt moment to start celebrating Philadelphia as "Music City, USA." The recent opening of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts on South Broad Street is already transforming the local experience of what for want of a better term we call "classical music," and has put its presentation here on the world map in no uncertain terms. Go backstage after a concert in the Center's main Verizon Hall, and you are likely to rub shoulders with out-of-town guests, orchestra managers and impresarios from Cleveland, New York or Zurich, and visiting musical luminaries and architects from anywhere in the world. The sense of occasion, and of excitement, has already been restored to the Philadelphia concert scene, and this welcome development can only be expected to snowball in the months and years to come.

Many details in the Kimmel still remain to be completed, and many more or less minor problems and annoyances to be sorted out. But despite some sporadic sniping in the local and indeed in the international press, it is already clear to most observers that, as the combined result of Rafael Vinoly's architectural design and Russell Johnson's acoustical planning, this is a unique, and triumphantly successful, performing arts center. The minute you enter the building, you feel that you are in a festive place for

music and people. The Commonwealth Plaza (as the vast lobby is called in honor of Pennsylvania's substantial financial input) already swarms with visitors, including many families with children, at many hours of the day. This public, moreover, and the audience you see at concerts, is markedly less lily-white than was previously the case, at least in the old Philadelphia Orchestra/Academy of Music set-up, and though there is still a long way to go, it also includes many more young people than before.

Verizon Hall is stunningly beautiful visually, blending warmth with a sense of electric expectancy. The sound, which still remains to be fine-tuned through the adjustment of Johnson's trademark resonance chambers and moveable panels over the next couple of years, seems to me to be that of one of the world's great halls, a view endorsed by many members of the Philadelphia Orchestra and of visiting ensembles. Kurt Masur (who on May 17 will make his farewell appearance here as music director of the New York Philharmonic) told me nearly twenty years ago that the Philadelphia was the only great orchestra in the world with a hall that was no help to its sound, and at last that will no longer be true. Doubtless partly in consequence, Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are now, for the first time in a decade, tough to get tickets for.



The author.

The smaller Perelman Theater is harder to evaluate thus far, since it is in a less finished state, and sound and appearance alike tend to change from one visit to the next, but here too the potential seems quite wonderful, and there is already a remarkable clarity of texture and a superfine distinctness in the projection of contrasted instrumental and vocal timbres. Again, the benefit both for Anthony Checchia's brilliantly-run Philadelphia Chamber Music

Society and for the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, formerly the Concerto Soloists, can already be felt (though, when I enthuse about the performances the Chamber Orchestra produces for its gifted young principal conductor, Ignat Solzhenitsyn, I should mention that I am now associated with the organization in various ancillary capacities).

With everything that has been going on in the Kimmel, music in

TURN TO MUSIC, PAGE 9

LINER NOTES

A brief selection from our favored playlists, appropriate for listening in the home, workplace, automobile, or for inclusion in mixtapes.

KING OF PRUSSIA

Blood Reigns Down on my Hometown

BEST FRIEND RECORDS

"Right where we've always been, waiting on our lives to begin," sings Sam Henderson, chief songwriter behind Philadelphia's King of Prussia. Finding the stinging specificity in the otherwise mundane is a trope of all Henderson's lyrics; lying through your teeth and sleeping on a subway platform never felt so profoundly regular. Behind all of these are some fuzzy pop-guitar hooks, lush vocal harmonies, and organ work. The second song is a little bit like being young - very pretty and all too short. You might have to listen to it on constant repeat and hum for awhile afterwards to get enough.

VOTE ROBOT

st and Versions

CATSUP PLATE RECORDS

Vote Robot shares one member with the band French Paddleboat, and like their *Conversions in Metric*, *Versions* is concerned with how machines break down -- the crackle of a dusty record, the chatter of a skipping CD.

I listened to this cassette over and over again for three months

before noticing that its 90 minutes were all iterations of the same haunting melody. Held in suspense, I kept wanting to hear the melody come out in the open and state itself cleanly, maybe even repeat a few times like it would in any pop song. But Vote Robot only periodically divulges it for 15 seconds, then buries it in a haze of bleepy, plinky, thrummy sounds, before digging it up again and discovering it has, like a chimera, assumed a new form that somehow manages to recall the first.

the greatest album you'll never hear.

THEN TEN

(unreleased)

From the ashes of North Jersey's All Natural Lemon and Lime Flavors comes a hybrid rock album which defies categorization at every attempt. Then Ten's songs are a lush combination of sounds and rhythms created by a calculated overlapping of patterns, time signatures, and melodies. The concept and realization are the result of (composer) Joshua Boothe's obsession with minimalist composition and his ongoing experiments with mathematically complicated rhythm and melodic structures. It would be incorrect to remove Then Ten from the Rock genre, but equally incorrect to place them alongside what is commonly labeled "Math Rock." Then Ten's music contains multiple simultaneous movements towards the same end rather than a sequence of complicated, linear sections strung together by complicated stops and starts. Besides being beautiful to hear, Then Ten is immeasurably challenging without being inaccessible. Just unavailable.

STONES, from page 1

Satanic Majesties is eternally incomplete. And though one might consider it the sixties' transition from innocence to turmoil, the Stones never really belonged to the ranks of wide-eyed, utopic innocence.

Up until this point, the Stones had banked on rebellion. When Jagger yelled out "Satisfaction," a scant two years earlier, the group had both immortalized and discovered the limits of its hell-raising, proto-punk ethos. "Satisfaction" bristled with both anxious hedonism and hedonistic anxiety; though not exactly neurotic, there are signs of frustration with one's self and the dwindling novelty of one's surroundings in its wildcat strut. The melancholy that crept into the songs on *Between the Buttons* and *Flowers* had its roots in "Satisfaction": either life caught up with them and cut them down, or they exhausted its possibilities and were left with nowhere to go.

Luckily, neither one happened. Their mature period, set off in dramatic fashion by the world-weary decadence of "Sympathy for the Devil," found the bad boys transformed into arch-fiends. The conflict of "Satisfaction" remained intact. But instead of living out the dilemma of depravity, the Stones were now its sponsors. There was no obligation to solve the riddle; they now posed it to others, a steady, comforting job if ever there was one. The only hint of mortality came in the occasional, alien pleas for redemption, which, in their desperation and remoteness, couldn't help but be futile - perhaps by choice.

Between "Satisfaction" and "Sympathy for the Devil" is *Satanic Majesties*. Depending on your tolerance for overkill, "Sympathy" is either Mick-as-Satan or Mick-identifying-with-Satan. As the title suggests, *Satanic Majesties* is the trip to hell - as honored guests - that imbued their antics with almost supernatural significance. The

Stones went from bad to evil; the cosmic overtones of the era may have inspired this leap, but, as the subsequent *Beggar's Banquet* would make clear, *Satanic Majesties* was about the Stones relative to themselves, not the epoch.

PICTURES OF US THROUGH THE STEAMY HAZE / PICTURES OF US PAINTED IN OUR CAVES

The times could well have provoked *Satanic Majesties* without providing its subject matter. With the Summer of Love, rebellion ceased to be threatening. Transgression was liberating, empowering, and decidedly positive, while the Stones' fixation on all things naughty seemed a bit immature. The Stones would have the last laugh when the sixties descended into a spiral of bad drugs, bad vibes and the collective's collapsing under its own weight. But for the time being, anything was possible, and community was something to which the individual wanted to belong - not something one lashed out at for his own personal, turbulent reasons. Egoism was out, bad behavior a casualty of pop relativism; rebellion's exhilaration was now bratty, counter-productive. Like the mainstream whose rules they flouted, or the movement that had gotten rid of all the rules, the Stones found themselves through the fiat of community. But in their case, community would be fleeting, law and order inverted.

Musically, there is nothing quite like *Satanic Majesties*. Its patchwork symphonies lack the dignity of Sgt. Pepper's or Smile, while the baroque trappings keep it from ever really drawing blood. The distempered horns and splintered percussion that open "Sing This All Together" are straight out of Sun Ra or the Art Ensemble of Chicago; "Citadel," on the other hand, is brutal enough to make "Satisfaction" blanch, leading some to complain that all the celestial gloss masks a great, forceful Stones album. One

could easily make a case for the opposite: that the characteristic bashing distracts from a more subtle, much more disturbing, record. Most impressive is the sheer discord. The Stones use both the familiar language of blues-rock and psych's mind-expanding sweeps to withering effect, a gnashing garage combo reflected in a handful of broken glass. *Majesties* is lush with distortion on every level, with no stable, friendly musical touchstone in sight. This antagonism is part of album's pervasive sneer, which comes through loud and clear in "Citadel's" invitation to "please come see me in the citadel (even if you can make it in, it will still be inhospitable)."

"MY FACE, IT TURNS A DEATHLY PALE/ YOU'RE TALKING TO ME THROUGH YOUR VEIL/ I HEAR YOU WAIL."

In January, on Salon.com, Douglas Cruickshank likened "Sympathy" to the opening scene of Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, in which an urbane Satan introduces himself to two writers discussing Jesus and Pontius Pilate. If "Sympathy" is the novel's opening scene, then *Majesties* is its coronation ball, for which the great community of hell, in its most comic, grotesque form, is roused together for the same huge banquet. The title is conveniently ambiguous. It could be the Stones, newly crowned, requesting the audience's presence. Or it could be Satan and his minions, calling the Stones to the party, who maybe even give their souls in exchange for a place in the high court of misdeed. *Satanic Majesties* is not the community of the sixties, but the community of hell that would make the Stones professional men with a job to do. With it, they discovered evil as a vocation, instead of the far-off, hush-hush endpoint of mischief-making. This album is no attempt to connect with fans, or update an old style. This is the Stones' trip, for entirely personal reasons.

The Yoo Kay's Wu Tang

The So Solid Crew chessboxes to Queensbury Rules.

BY KEVIN PEARSON

You've got to question a band's artistic quality when they garner more column inches for their offstage antics than for their music. Some bands, like the Sex Pistols or Oasis, court negative publicity as part of their act, while for others, controversy just follows them around like a stray dog, pissing and shitting all over their career, whether they want it or not. One band that cannot go a week without creating a fever in the British press is London's gangsta hip-hop sensation the So Solid Crew, and not every story is about their music. Described by some as the British answer to the Wu Tang Clan, the So Solid Crew have swam in the sea of controversy since their first burst onto the UK garage scene in early 2000. ("Garage" music, in Britain, refers to a burgeoning genre that steals equal parts from techno, rap, hip hop, R and B, and soul, and is not to be confused with American garage rock.)

The So Solid saga is one of shootings, murders, cancelled tours, and multiple felony arrests ranging from assault to firearm possession. Producer Megaman spent four months in prison on a murder charge before being acquitted; Asher D is currently locked up for firearms possession; Skat D was charged with assaulting a 16-year-old girl. But despite their run-ins with the law, the thirty-plus member Crew has still managed to release a string of number one singles and albums, and many members have found time for solo acts. They were even awarded two trophies at the MOBO awards (Music Of Black Origin) last October for Best Newcomer and Best Garage Act.

Their debut album, *They Don't Know*, is a violent one, filled with threats to haters, an abundance of guns, and gangsta bravado. The music sounds like a mix of Missy Elliott and Eminem; the lyrics a cartoonish British interpretation of American tough-guy posturing (sample: "I think I'm deep? I go deeper than the graves where they bury the foot-and-mouth sheep"). The collective

cites the late Tupac Shakur, as well as New Yorker DMX, as primary influences. So Solid member Face said of Tupac: "I can understand the lyrics... and he was doing the same thing we're trying to do now, he was writing about what was happening and other peoples' lives." While Americans could perhaps laugh off the group as *CBA* come to life, in Britain the So Solid Crew has become a national phenomenon.

Their offstage antics have been followed like a soap opera, first by the press and now by the public. People wait with baited breath to hear what various members have been up to, and even those who don't like the music are interested in the members' real-life personas. Some people, namely my friends back in Blighty, have questioned So Solid's legitimacy as prophets of urban strife, since their real-life mishaps seem so outlandish. From what I know, though, they are for real, at least in the sense that they weren't manufactured for their image by music industry profiteers.

The Crew, of course, claims the most genuine urban roots. Emcee Face spoke about Battersea, the London suburb where most of the group's emcees, DJs, producers and musicians were raised, in an interview with *Designer* magazine in January: "We were brought up in the worst part of a neighborhood where all that happens is fighting, stealing and robbing.... That's it. That's where I grew up. It was the sort of place where the government would never put any money. That's really where I came from and grew up in."

The Crew's road to the top of the charts has coincided with a rising tide of inner city violence. Last summer, race riots lit up Northern England as whites and Asians fought pitched battles following several race-related attacks. (As well, a new gun culture, similar to that which happened between East and West coast rap here in America, has grown out of the urban unrest.) The media has chosen the So Solid Crew - against their will,

they claim - to soundtrack the current cultural climate.

Why is Britain so hooked on this group? Probably because this is the first time that a black, urban, (and British) hip-hop project has ever made it so big in the UK. We've had the Beatles and their drug abuse, the Sex Pistols with their anarchy, and Oasis with their working-class hedonism, but never before has the British public been faced with a 30-strong group of non-white musicians, straight from the streets. Like the Beatles after the depressing 1950's, the Crew is a product of its own cultural moment, claiming simply to reflect the current state of urban British youth. As well, somewhat like the Sex Pistols did 25 years ago, the So Solid Crew highlights everything wrong with Britain right now, and that's why they're so popular. And with the British music industry currently dominated by bland boy bands and non-descript "dad rock" acts such as Travis, it's no surprise that the press have picked up on the So Solid Crew's bad boy image.

At the beginning of this year, after months of violence at their concerts and a few more arrests, the group decided to let the music do the talking yet again. Following the success of *They Don't Know*, the group released a mix compilation entitled "Fuck it." But more trouble was lurking around the corner. Last month, 19-year-old rapper Asher D pleaded guilty to a gun possession charge and is currently awaiting sentence in Feltham Young Offenders and Remand Centre in West London, where, according to The Sun newspaper, he has been put in solitary confinement after being victimized by the other inmates. It seems safe to say that this won't be the last time the So Solid Crew will make headlines for something other than their albums.

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THE SEASONED SUPPER

AN EATER'S DIGEST.

Cheese Wars

A little bad blood never hurt a good cheese.

BY PATRICK LIEDTKA

With artisanal cheeses, cheese courses and all things fromage taking center stage these days, rather than serving only as gloppy accompaniment on bad pizza or Tex-Mex, it pays to shop where they know their Manchego from their Mascarpone. Sure, you can pick up most of the good stuff from Fresh Fields or other gourmet chains, but why support a Texas conglomerate when you can keep your money local and your shopping interesting? Since this is Philly, there's even a little bad blood involved, so you can make an enemy — or stoke a feud — just by shopping for cheese. What a city!

Let's start with the Italian Market heavyweights. Di Bruno Bros. (930 S. 9th Street; 103 & 109 S. 18th Street) and Claudio's (926 S. 9th Street) have been staring down one another on Ninth Street for decades. I've been a Di Bruno's man during my time

here, but an Italian friend recently brought over a selection of Claudio's goods and I'd have stabbed someone for that last bit of smoked Mozzarella and sundried tomatoes soaked in herbed olive oil. The Di Brunos' shops are friendly places, but avoid the Italian Market location on Saturdays unless you're confident enough to yell your order from a long line of bristling, impatient customers. I haven't actually been to Claudio's, but if you go tell them Joseph Sorrentino sent you. That's my friend who swears by them. He's moved away so he won't mind.

The upstart challenging the venerable Italians is Downtown Cheese at the Reading Terminal Market (12th and Arch), a year-old counter with hipster staff who'll let you sample 'til you're stuffed and make great recommendations. I once overheard the owner bad-mouthing Di Bruno's Best of Philly win last year, hinting to a local chef that it was nostalgia, not quality, at the root of their victory. So if you want to have some fun, tell the bald guy with an earring that you heard Di Bruno's is the best in town. These kind of rivalries are what keep us Philadelphians in good cheese.

BREAD & INK

After spending all day in the forest (felling trees for the pulp) and all night in the foundry (casting steel for the type) the Editors require a unique species of provision: Something that fattens our constitutions without thinning our already lean pocketbooks.

SAAD'S - 45TH AND WALNUT

The best falafel in Philadelphia. They come rolled-up, not in pita pockets, and the spice and texture of the falafel and hummus are both perfect. Add grape leaves and a can of Goya pear nectar and you're looking at a pretty fantastic \$5 lunch. Sometimes, when you're standing at the counter, dumbfounded by exactly what to order, Saad will smile and suggest something, which is invariably just what you wanted anyway. Trust him.

ANGKOR - 11TH BETWEEN ARCH & RACE

One of the best Vietnamese spots in Chinatown, far less crowded than Vietnam and just as reasonable. Every time I go there, I always order the same thing (the curried tofu and rice vermicelli), which never fails to satisfy. I've never actually tried anything else on the menu, though the beef-tip soup comes pretty highly recommended from various friends. And the coffee with sweet condensed milk is a fine digestif.

KOCH'S DELI - 4309 LOCUST

Like Pat's and Geno's, Koch's can never quite catch up with the stream of customers spilling into its doors, so people are herded into a long single file line, for 45 minutes, in their shoebox storefront on Locust St. Of course, people wouldn't cram themselves into a tiny deli if the hoagies weren't so damn good, and the staff is kind enough to pass out selections of various meats and cheeses to snack on while you wait. Sweet Munchie cheese is a particular sandwich favorite.

NICE NOODLE HOUSE - 1038 RACE ST.

A friend once complained to me that the "diner" concept had never been applied to Asian food, so we went here, and he took it back. The food is good, hot, and cheap, served in a clean, well-lit place. It is also extremely fast, usually arriving at your table less than 5 minutes after the order. This may have to do with the restaurant's constant surplus of waiters, a dozen of whom always seem to be idling by the register.

THE ACROPOLIS DINER - FRANKFORD AND GIRARD

This stingy tenant knew he'd found the neighborhood spot upon he stumbling into his landlord at breakfast. The coffee is hot and frequent and a half-dozen egg breakfasts are priced under \$3. But if you like eating in booths, leave one of your four friends at home.

The Chef's Report

A pastry chef takes a break from the line to recommend a few of her favorites.

BY SONJIA SPECTOR

I have noticed something strange in my last two years of working in the Philadelphia restaurant scene. Save a few, the popularity and press of most restaurants are very short lived. People seem drawn only to the hottest new spots, and then move on to the next. Very often, wonderful restaurants and talented chefs are quickly forgotten in people's quest to see and be seen.

I'm tempted to put diners into two categories: those who work in the restaurant business and those who do not. You'll see the first group out Sunday-Wednesday, and the other group on Thursday-Saturday. I fit into the restaurant business category, so one could assume that I have sampled food from the finest chefs, drank some of the finest wines, and will only eat in the chicest dining establishments.

The first two are partly true. I have tasted the workings of some fabulous chefs in my still young career, mostly by way of swiping end cuts of meat and dipping my spoon into their sauces while working next to them. I have also drank some wonderful wines, often by hanging around when a wine rep stops in, or tasting something the wait staff is sharing at the end of the night. But as far as the chic establishments go, I think I speak for most of my peers when I say that I rarely visit them. At the end of our work-week (usually Saturday night), after the last diners have gotten their desserts, most of us in the kitchen have something else in mind. We want to be comfortable. We want to relax, go someplace familiar, see people we know. We want good food in our favorite places, and here is a short list of a few of them.

We go to the bar at Fork (306 Market St.) where the bartenders are wonderful, there are always fun people to talk to, and the cocktails and wine list never disappoint.

If we are hungry late at night, but still want some nice service, we love Sassafras (48 South 2nd St.). No matter how crowded, we can always get a table in a candlelit corner, and their French onion soup is fabulous.

Another favorite late night spot for food is Valanni (1229 Spruce

St.). Get the mussels, red or white. I am also a big fan of the chicken, pear, and Brie sandwich on grilled bread.

Sunday nights I usually feel very health conscious, and compared to my diet all week long, anything at Vietnam (221 North 11th St., at Vine) fits the bill. The service is great, the food fresh, and I've never had a check over \$35.

My husband introduced me to Mustard Greens (622 South 2nd St.) when we first met, and it continues to be one of my favorites. The food is consistently great and the staff incredibly attentive and kind.

Monday afternoons, when the lunch rush is ending, the Rouge (205 South 18th St.) bar is the most comfortable seat in the world. My girlfriend loves the Roquefort salad and I always order from the daily specials. We chat with the bartender and watch all the Rittenhouse characters stroll by.

Everyone knows the Standard Tap (901 North 2nd St.) as a favorite for their hamburgers, but have you tried their homemade soups? Wonderful! A huge (and I mean huge) steaming bowlful with bread is sometimes hard to finish.

For something a little more chic, Twenty Manning (259 South 20th St.) has been very promising. My last two meals there have proven that the chef is paying close attention.

Although I've always loved Alma de Cuba (1623 Walnut St.), I've never eaten upstairs in the dining rooms. I prefer the warmth and spur-of-the-moment feel of the first floor lounge, sitting back on a comfy couch, eating appetizers, and sipping mojitos.

The recent budding of turnkey B.Y.O.B. spots is creating many new outlets for foodies to enjoy. We can spend a little less money, break out a bottle of wine we've been wanting to drink, and eat some wonderful food made by someone we probably know from some point in our restaurant careers. Chloe (232 Arch St.) has proven exactly what the owners intended: a warm environment where the food speaks for itself. No clutter, no loud music, just good food made with fresh ingredients. Although I haven't been able to make it to Django (526 South 4th St.) yet (but believe me, I've tried), I hear nothing but positive reviews about the food and the service. And just recently a friend and I stumbled upon Azafran (617 South 3rd St.): a quaint little place serving South American food with a lot of enthusiasm. They take your name at the door, send you down the street for a drink, and call you on your cell phone when your table is ready. Now that's accommodation!

UNDER THE TABLE

AN OBSCURE SECT OF FREEMASONS ARE SAID TO BE OPENING AN EXCLUSIVE AFTER-HOURS BAR, ONLY OPEN TO THOSE WHO KNOW A SECRET PASSWORD AND ARE WILLING TO PAY UPWARDS OF \$250 FOR A FIFTH OF JOHNNY WALKER RED. THE NAME? WHY, 33 OF COURSE.

CERTAIN LETTERS IN MR. AMOROSI'S NAME HAVE GROWN SINCE THIS TIME LAST YEAR. WE SUSPECT A STEADY DIET OF CAPITAL IS TO BLAME.



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Sat 4/20 - Sun Ra Arkestra (legendary jazz ensemble)
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Sat 5/4 - Cisco Jeeters (punk/country)
Fri 5/10 - Calvin Westin's Big Tree
Wed 5/15 - The Movement
Thurs 5/16 - Hard Liquor Theater (outrageous cabaret)
Sat 5/18 - Sun Ra Arkestra
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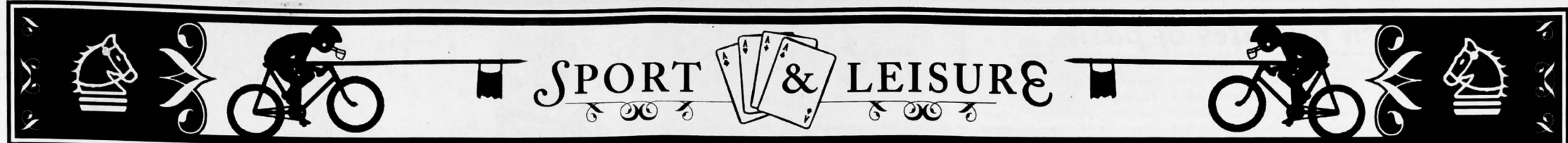
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ARDUOUS DIVERSIONS FOR THE NOVICE SLOTH

NL EAST

1. ATLANTA BRAVES

They trumped all the tinkering in Queens by stealing Gary Sheffield from the Dodgers and stand to have their best offense in years if things break right - Andruw Jones getting labotomized, Rafael Furcal getting on base like he did in 2000, somebody other than Wes Helms starting at first. Either Keven Millwood needs to find it again or Jason Marquis needs to live up to his talent.

2. NEW YORK METS

Robbie Alomar is one of the game's best players, despite his Roberto Duranesque *no más* attitude in Game 5 of the Seattle series last year. Mo Vaughn seems to be laying off the cheeseburgers. The starting pitching situation is muddled after Al Leiter, the ceiling on Shawn Estes, Pedro Astacio, and Jeff D'Amico are high, but the latter two have serious health concerns while the former needs to get to swallow his nuts and compete.

3. PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Getting Mike Lieberthal back is huge. Also, if Pat the Bat lives up to his name, a pretty good lineup becomes really dangerous. To make the postseason they need to catch a few breaks: staying healthy, shelving the Rolan crap, and nobody killing Larry Bowa.

4. FLORIDA MARLINS

Josh Beckett is the real deal, and Ryan Dempster and A.J. Burnett should eventually become number two type guys. But when? Cliff Floyd is a monster. Preston Wilson is a fine player despite his swing-hard-in-case-you-hit-it approach at the plate. But after that, things get ugly.

5. MONTREAL EXPOS

If Fernando Tatis pulls it together and gives Vlad Guerrero protection in the lineup, they'll score some runs. Javier Vazquez is a legitimate number one starter and Tony Armas Jr. is an alright pitcher, but some of the guys they'll run out on a daily basis are cringeworthy.

NL CENTRAL

1. ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

The front office doesn't get enough credit for

putting this team together. They've got three legitimate middle of the order hitters, while Matt Morris is a monster at the top of the rotation and the guys behind him are top notch for their slots. Adding Jason Irsinghausen has a ripple effect that upgrades the whole bullpen. Perhaps the most amazing thing is that such a good team was assembled despite having racist Tony LaRussa in the dugout.

2. HOUSTON ASTROS

This is a really intriguing team, with front-line young starters Roy Oswalt and Wade Miller eating up innings, mean-as-hell bullpen duo Octavio Dotel and Billy Wagner owning the last two frames, and an explosive offense wearing out opposing pitching. However, the baseball gods will never smile on this team as long as their outfield contains both a hill and a flag pole.

3. CHICAGO CUBS

It's too bad they're in this division, because the Cubbies could be downright nasty if uberphenom Mark Prior steps in and gives them a third frontline starter after Kerry Wood and John Lieber. Moises Alou will really help the offense. Sammy Sosa's an amazing player and a clubhouse cancer - a volatile combination. Can young flamethrower Kyle Farnsworth handle the closer's role?

4. PITTSBURGH PIRATES

"I remember hitting a couple of batters and the bases were loaded two or three times. The ball was small sometimes, the ball was large sometimes, sometimes I saw the catcher, sometimes I didn't. Sometimes I tried to stare the hitter down and throw while I was looking at him. I chewed my gum until it turned to powder. They say I had about three to four felding chances. I remember diving out of the way of a ball I thought was a line drive. I jumped, but the ball wasn't hit hard and never reached me." - Doc Ellis, on the 1970 no-hitter he threw for the Pirates while on three hits of acid.

5. MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Brewer hitters had more strikeouts than hits last year - a truly pathetic achievement. And they can't pitch or field either. And their farm system's nothing special. So why should anybody listen to owner/commissioner Bud Selig's ideas about how baseball teams and the sport as a whole should be run?

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PICKS

OUR GRIZZLED SCOUT MAKES SOME TOUGH CHOICES.

Choice Number One: To use his powers of prophecy for good, and never for evil.

THANK GOODNESS!

BY SAM HANDLIN

NL East Champs: BRAVES
NL Central Champs: CARDS
NL West Champs: D-BACKS
Wild Card: ASTROS
NLDS: CARDS over D-BACKS,
BRAVES over ASTROS
NLCS: CARDS over BRAVES

World Series:
CARDINALS over MARINERS

AL East Champs: YANKEES
AL Central Champs: WHITE SOX
AL West Champs: MARINERS
Wild Card: RED SOX
ALDS: YANKEES over WHITE SOX,
MARINERS over RED SOX
ALCS: MARINERS over YANKEES

NL WEST

1. ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

The D-Backs get the nod based on their starting pitching, but the division is wide open. This is largely a team of overpaid thirtysomethings on the decline: Jay Bell, Matt Williams, Mark Grace, Steve Finley, now Rick L. Helling. Ouch. If Luis Gonzalez doesn't replicate his monster year, offense is a concern. Will Byung-Hyun Kim make it back from chokesville? Bob Brenley can't manage for shit, as he demonstrated over and over again in the World Series only to have it all forgotten after game seven.

2. COLORADO ROCKIES

This team is on the right track and might surprise a few people. They've got young guys with loads of potential up the middle and, in Larry Walker and Todd Helton, two of the league's best players. And pitching? Mike Hampton is better than he showed last year, but the same thing can't be said about Denny Neagle or Scott Elarton, two guys made to get lit up at Coors Field.

3. SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

They'll take their average talent and win more than they lose because of Dusty Baker and the monster bullpen combination of Robb Nen and Felix Rodriguez. Losing

Ellis Burks matters, and Barry Bonds can't put up RBI Baseball numbers again. On the mound, Russ Ortiz is the real deal but change the channel if you see Livan Hernandez.

4. LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Brian Jordan is a notorious good guy, but couldn't they have gotten some actual talent for Gary Sheffield? Shawn Green will go 30/30 and put yarmulkes in the seats - the two jobs he was explicitly signed to do - but he can't carry the load himself. The pitching staff seems to have gotten worse as well. Management decided they were too right-handed, with too much hard, sinking stuff. Okay, but is substituting the soft, straight stuff of southpaw Omar Daal really the answer?

5. SAN DIEGO PADRES

I hate putting this team last, but in this division they're the club of the future, not the present. The good news is that they have a group of very talented young pitchers: the gifted-as-hell Sean Burroughs, and several other top-notch prospects set to join Phil Nevin, Disco Klesko (fatty can swipe bases!), and Trevor Hoffman as the core of a good team. The bad news is that the rotation this season is going to include such notables as Kevin Jarvis, Brian Toller, and Bobby Jones.

AL EAST

1. NEW YORK YANKEES

The division is the Yankees' to lose. They'll

miss the little things that Paul O'Neill, Tino Martinez, and Scott Brosius brought to the team. And injury karma seems to be reaching critical mass. But this is still a World Series team that brought in the best left-handed hitter in the league. And in Steve Karsay they've finally got an adequate replacement for Jeff Nelson. They could be downright scary if Fat Roger's legs and Boomer Wells's liver hold up.

2. BOSTON RED SOX

They'll be better for chemistry reasons alone after the house cleaning, although outgoing GM Dan Duquette did his damndest to sabotage them by bringing Ricky Henderson into the mix. You might remember him as the man who sulked in the clubhouse playing cards with Bobby Bonilla during Mets playoff games a couple years back.

3. TORONTO BLUE JAYS

New GM J.P. Ricciardi will turn this franchise around. They might not even be that bad this year, though playoff contention is a stretch. Starters Chris Carpenter and Roy Halladay need to live up to their talent. On offense, the Jays have a lot of thunder but strike out too much and have trouble manufacturing runs against good pitching. That's a problem if they want to reach the next level.

4. BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Remember when this team was really good? Their major league players suck. Their farm system sucks. Peter Angelos is just maniacally presiding over his ruined kingdom, cursing Jeffrey Mayer all the while.

5. TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS

Not even worth talking about. Seriously.

AL CENTRAL

1. CHICAGO WHITE SOX

This is a good team that had awful luck with injuries last year. They're going to wear out the basepaths with an offense that's pretty solid throughout the lineup, but the rotation's riddled with question marks after Mark Buehrle. The mound uncertainty is all the more pressing because this team is awful with the leather at almost every position.

2. MINNESOTA TWINS

The Twinkies have the best defense in baseball, but you need to score runs to win in the American League and they don't do that very well. The bullpen is a big question mark. Closer Latroy Hawkins is a nightmare. How will this young team react to all the contraction controversy and the loss of Tom Kelly in the dugout?

3. CLEVELAND INDIANS

Put aside all the talk about the Tribe retooling their team around their pitching - this is a club on the decline and the pitching staff isn't going to save it. Bartolo Colon isn't that great, and C.C. Sabathia hasn't learned to change speeds on the mound or slow down at the buffet table. That Chuck Finley got lit up last year wasn't a fluke. And is there something about Charlie Manuel he's not telling? Because I can't think of any other reason to invite Brady Anderson to camp.

4. DETROIT TIGERS

Nasty Jeff Weaver. Not just one of the most underrated pitchers in the game, he's also a brawl-starter nonpareil. Each of the last two years he's pretty much single-handedly ignited an enormous bench-clearing throw-down. But that's the only reason to watch the Tigers, because this team is going nowhere. They built Comerica to have a park friendly to young pitchers, but then they forgot to develop any Whoops!

5. KANSAS CITY ROYALS

The Royals keep giving away good players and getting crap in return. There's just no commitment to winning. Why isn't this team ever mentioned as a contraction possibility?

AL WEST

1. SEATTLE MARINERS

Last year was no fluke. They've got a deep pitching staff, a great bullpen, and the best defense this side of Minnesota. But while the offense hit on all cylinders in 2001, they're not that far removed from mediocrity. An injury to Edgar Martinez, or Bret Boone becoming Bret Boone again, could spell trouble. It will do wonders for the team if Gil Meche breaks out and gives them another hard thrower in the rotation.

2. OAKLAND ATHLETICS

If Miguel Tejada and Eric Chavez magically acquire a sense of pitch selection, Terence Long justifies his existence, and David Justice gets a body transplant, this team could still score some runs.

3. TEXAS RANGERS

Thunder and lots of it. Both at the plate and in the clubhouse, the stage is set for the great John Rocker - Carl Everett throw down. The smart money's on Rocker because of his size, but all bets are off if Everett introduces any foreign objects - like, say, a bat. People who don't believe in dinosaurs and lunar landings can't be trusted. Neither can agents like Scott Boras, but owner Tom Hicks seems adamantly opposed to understanding this.

4. ANAHEIM ANGELS

Only in the notoriously fertile imaginations of Disney executives is this team contending. It's true that they have a surplus of solid, middle-rotation starters, but so what? They're not going to score any runs. Tim Lincecum is done. Darin Erstad defines unreliable. Garret Anderson sucks. And little scrappers David Eckstein and Adam Kennedy make nice stories but mediocre players. Free Troy Percival!

NEXT TO THE POET OVID, IBID WAS THE MOST PROLIFIC WRITER IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF ROMAN LITERATURE. UNLIKE OVID, HOWEVER, ALL OF IBID'S WORKS SURVIVE INTACT.

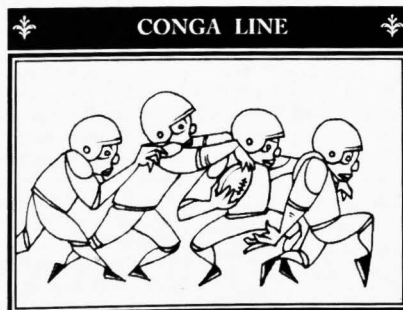
DIRTY TRICKS

The Patriots' Superbowl victory proved two things: that fate is mightier than talent, and that a painfully simple offense can still put points on the board. While the former is one of God's great, enduring mysteries, the latter is the last hurrah of a relic-in-cleats.

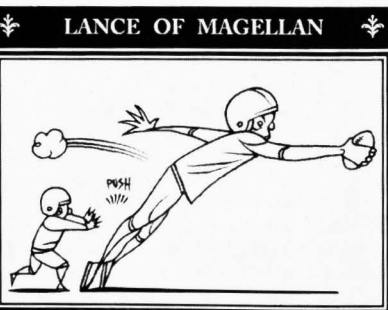
The Rams lost the battle, but may have won the war. The dominance of Mike Martz's Manhattan-Project-on-turf was a wake-up call for other teams, who followed suite with grid-iron puzzlers of their own. Deemed "the season of the trick play," this past NFL campaign set a new precedent for sideline creativity.

Although teams should probably spend the off-season trying to keep their stars and sign free agents, there's a lot of work to be done if they want to keep pace with the times. Here are a few suggestions, so they can rest easy this summer.

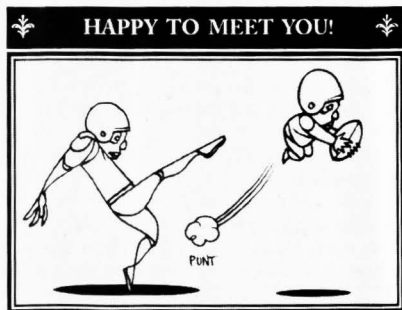
by Nathaniel Friedman, Avi Korine, & Jacob Weinstein



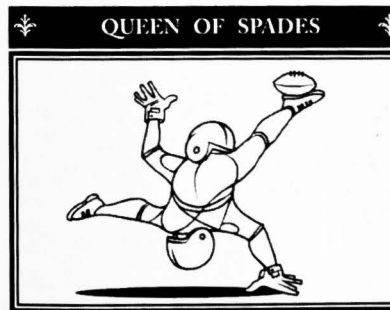
Physically speaking, there is no stopping the many. An impressively durable quarterback takes the snap and gradually feels the entirety of his squad lining behind him. Pushing forward as one, gigantic species, they make their way up the field. There will be scars and hands on other men's hips, but the fire within will rip the clouds out of the sky when, slowly but surely, the opponent is trampled and the goal line beckons ahead, glowing in the afternoon.



A handful of people are blessed with inordinate tallness. Usually they go on to become recognizable, extremely tall, centers. But there's a place for them in America's other great sport of the evening, Line tall man up in back field. Hand him the ball. Push him over, face first, so that he topples across the first-down line like so many felled timbers. His momentum alone will clear out a safe spot to land, so don't worry about the defense propping him back up.



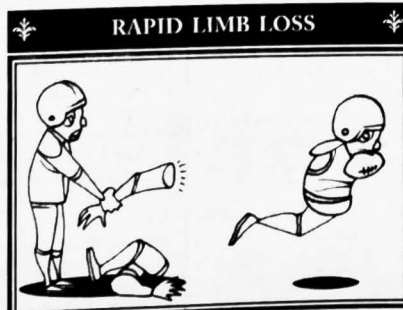
Other people are shorter and less massive than these, or any other, people. They too can be of great service at your next crucial sporting event. Pretend to go for a field goal. Hike the ball to said small person. Wait for him to tuck said ball safely into his little belly, watch kicker knock man and ball into an upward arc of glory, cheer with power when your guy lands in the end zone, untouched and carefree.



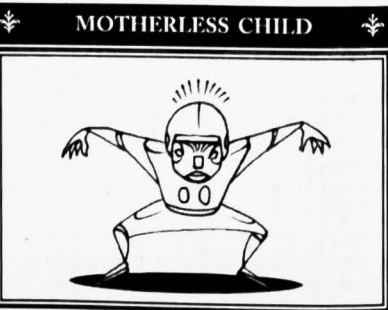
Everyone knows that football is a game of odds. When a man goes down, he's down for good. Unless, of course, the odds render it impossible. Allow us to demonstrate: a man, average height, medium build, puts a helmet on his head, pads on his shoulders, and jersey atop it all. Cut to the crotch: stick a helmet there, with a padded groin to comfort it and a jersey worn, sash-like. This is symmetry at his finest. He has no knees to down. He is mind only; he is a winner.



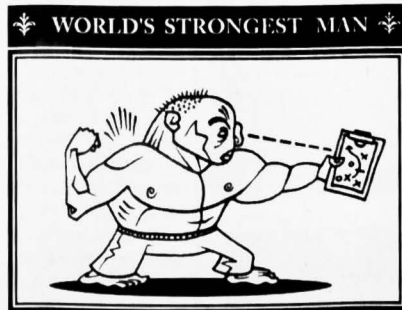
En nuestros vecinos al sur, una tradición violenta y urgente del balmopie ha rubado para la parte mejor del siglo. Estas ligas están seguras de conseguir más atención en los meses que vienen, pues sus juegos son trozos insondables del arte del juego del truco. Su contribución más grande! Esta vieja lista de espera, precisamente como el núcleo del oro. Equipar el equipo con los warners del brazo, por ejemplo es popular en zonas menos templadas. Cada uno sorprenderá a la multa fuera warners de esa de estos mano como exactamente como el balmopie desinflado. Nadie sabe el suceso de wabats. La gente está parada, mira fijamente y se pregunta Y rápidamente, como dolor bajo las aguas más ligeras, se hace el momento del aterrizaje.



This man loses limbs like others grow them: by force of nature. The slightest touch, push or tug and he is torn asunder. He has lost it all, but is still free to move across the field.



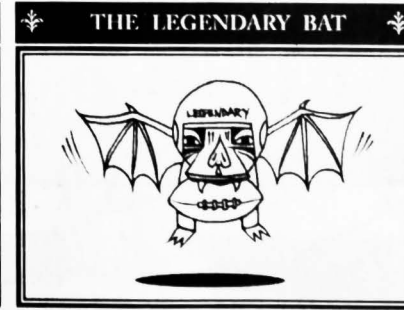
The man has no birthday. Just try and stop him.



Men of great strength built this game, like monsters in a perfect world. This man is no exception. His might is an asset, and he will be your offensive coordinator.



Setting fire to one's opponent: can it be true? Invisible fire solves this problem.



Bats are special and compassionate. Line a bat up at wide receiver. Make sure he's in uniform, so no one will notice his bat-don. Throw pass to him, which he will catch mid-flight, and spirit away safely into darkest night.

* ROUGH TRANSLATION: WHERE IS THE BALL?: In our neighbors to the south, a violent and urgent tradition of the football has raged for the best part of the century. It is determined that these alloys will obtain more attention in the months that come, because their games are troves of the art of the game of the trick. Its greater contribution? This old waiting list, in full load like the seed of the gold. The square is supplied with warners of the arm, for example he is popular in temperate zones. Each one was surprised by fine warners of the arm, the moment becomes of the landing. Nobody knows the event of what. People are stopped, watch fixedly and she is asked. And quickly, like pain under the lightest waters, the moment becomes of the landing.

Fifteen minutes of pain

MARBLER, from page 1

ing, but factoring in alcohol and this kind of devilish charm, free will has been compromised to the Nth degree.

Their lives are lived in accordance with the characters whose names they've taken, Raymond and Connie Marbles, "the filthiest people alive" from John Waters' 1972 cult classic film *Pink Flamingos*. They have so completely immersed themselves in these identities that one might as well be asking Waters himself about his toe-sucking creations when one asks these two about their origins.

The Philly Marbles claim only to be the reincarnations of the Movie Marbles, who were executed on screen, though they do retain all memories of their past lives. They have every line and inflection of the movie flawlessly memorized, and will seamlessly sneak bits and pieces of it into conversation, a very frightening experience even for those who've seen the movie.

In *Pink Flamingos*, the Marbles characters are a couple of stuck-up, white trash degenerates with red and blue hair (including pubes), who suck each other's toes and make their money by capturing female hitchhikers, chaining them up in their basement, impregnating them by their butler Channing, and selling the babies to lesbian couples after they've given them names like "Noodles" and the mothers have died during childbirth. Other sources of income include their pornography shops and an elementary school heroin ring.

It is unlikely, from what I've seen, that there are any girls chained up in the Philly Marbles' basement; all I saw were washers and dryers. Their source of income, though known by this author, will remain a secret, but suffice it to say that it is nothing as strenuous or illicit as kidnapping, baby-selling, porn-mongering, or selling drugs to K-through-6ers. What is for certain, however, is that they have "shows." Certain, I say, because I was a participant one night.

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Throughout the little 'gayborhood' southeast of City Hall, there could be hundreds of live webcams running, projecting scenes around the globe of bodily events that before the advent of the celluloid age had only been captured by Heironymous Bosch, and publicly committed by Caligula. It seems appropriate, when hearing some of this section of Center City's stories, that you couldn't have "Philadelphia" without "pediphil" (love of feet), "pedophilia" (love of children, alt. form), or most tellingly "hade-philia" (love of hell). All the -philias are said to go on with inordinate regularity in this one small

splotch of our fair city's grid. Fecophilia, necrophilia, sado-masochism, dom. & sub., bestiality, polygyny and polyandry, and even "gasp" homosexuality. If one were to believe all one hears, one would think that Pan himself had settled down on a corner near 12th and Pine and spread his horny habits throughout the surrounding thoroughfares.

Yes, there could be score upon score of live broadcasts beaming out from these blocks, giving millions of web voyeurs a glimpse of how the stranger half lives, a pornographic education thanks to the kindly, instructional exhibitionism of Philadelphia's many sexual deviants, but unfortunately, most webcam operators don't post a home address. (How strange!) So these...these *perverts* are allowed to mingle easily with society in complete anonymity, walk out into the day- or night-light in unassuming, inconspicuous garb with their scrotal and labial piercings hidden from view beneath even the tightest of pants, and go to work as waitress, shop clerk, bartender, librarian, counselor without fear of being discovered.

Or better yet, they could be standing in line for Tattooed Mom's next door and he called out to me "Ohh! Steven Patrick Morrissey! Hello Mr. Morrissey! [Then to his companion] You know I love my Steven Patrick Morrissey..." They kindly escorted me to Manny Brown's but let me go only after I promised to join them after meeting my friends. When I found them upstairs, Mr. Marbles (without the little missus for the night) was poised like, well, like a flamingo on a bar stool, hand gracefully grasping a glass, legs carefully folded, demeanor pleasantly detached. "Oh look, Morrissey's joined us..." There was a call from Connie, from Los Angeles I was told, and Raymond said she'd like to talk to me. Connie rather gruffly asked me who I was, what I did, and above all, if I were gay. She was disappointed at my No, so I tried to console her by noting that I had photos of myself both nude and in drag on the Net. She seemed lacklusterly intrigued, and ordered me to "give the phone back to my husband." When they ended their conversation, I told Raymond that I thought I might've scared Mrs. Marbles. "Hah! Tina did you hear that? He said he thinks he scared Connie! Morrissey, my wife isn't easily frightened. It is she that most people are scared of. Some of our friends think I'm crazy, but they're all sure she's out of her mind."

But what about the freaks that go public?

PAINTING THE TOWN RED

To those who've met them out and about on their nightly excursions — they're virtually omnipresent in Philadelphia's bars and nightclubs — they seem to be a harmless pair of kooks, a rather haughty couple of drama queens with a taste for kitsch cinema. But that's exactly how they get away with it! They can and do spout off about their bloodlust and past victims all the time, but amidst a haze of cigarette smoke, loud house music, dry Manhattans and a dizzying array of reenacted scenes, this mention of nude boy-toys prancing wounded around their living room to the beat of the stereo sounds like just another quote from the script, just another playful put-on. To those who've witnessed or taken part in the carnage, however (there are repeat performers, believe it or not), it's just another night at the Marbles'.

In any given night of club-hopping and cocktail-sipping, they throw out a litany of cultural references; pages torn from the Hollywood Badass Bible. Here

you pick up a line from *Pink Flamingos*, or Divine's *E! True Hollywood Story*, there a quote from the oft-rewound death threat message that Courtney Love left on Liz Kirschner's answering machine in *Kurt & Courtney*, a quip from an Audrey Hepburn-era diva flick, a verse from the dirtiest Lil' Kim jams, or the chorus of a Peaches bomb track like "Fuck the Pain Away" or "Only Double-A but I'm Feelin' Triple-X." Sometimes you don't know where the hell they're pulling it from; it sounds almost biblical. Other times you know they're just riffing. "That sounded like a threat to my divinity! He'll pay with his life!" And everything is sprinkled with liberal doses of "Pretty accurate so far's," "Well I don't know about all *that's*," "Ooh you know I love my's," as well as the über-dramatic, soft-spoken "Whyyyy yes. Yes it does." For most people it's all in the inflection, and theirs is no slouch, but the Marbles lexicon is so tight with gems that even a Speak n' Spell could sound fierce coldly chunking out their lines.

I first met Raymond on my way to Manny Brown's. They were standing in line for Tattooed Mom's next door and he called out to me "Ohh! Steven Patrick Morrissey! Hello Mr. Morrissey! [Then to his companion] You know I love my Steven Patrick Morrissey..." They kindly escorted me to Manny Brown's but let me go only after I promised to join them after meeting my friends. When I found them upstairs, Mr. Marbles (without the little missus for the night) was poised like, well, like a flamingo on a bar stool, hand gracefully grasping a glass, legs carefully folded, demeanor pleasantly detached. "Oh look, Morrissey's joined us..." There was a call from Connie, from Los Angeles I was told, and Raymond said she'd like to talk to me. Connie rather gruffly asked me who I was, what I did, and above all, if I were gay. She was disappointed at my No, so I tried to console her by noting that I had photos of myself both nude and in drag on the Net. She seemed lacklusterly intrigued, and ordered me to "give the phone back to my husband." When they ended their conversation, I told Raymond that I thought I might've scared Mrs. Marbles. "Hah! Tina did you hear that? He said he thinks he scared Connie! Morrissey, my wife isn't easily frightened. It is she that most people are scared of. Some of our friends think I'm crazy, but they're all sure she's out of her mind."

It turned out that I lived not two blocks from la casa de Marbles, so it was hard to resist an invite. Topsy on gin & juice, Mr. Marbles peed in someone's doorway on the way home, as he and his friend Tina talked freely and amusingly about all the healthy patients who'd gone under the knife over the years. He recalled a particular

bloody show from last year, after which their volunteer apparently spread a rumor that he and Mrs. Marbles were psychopaths. "I mean where does he get off saying that about us? If you ask me, he was the psychopath. Why, that boy left stains all over the carpet of our happy home!" As Connie told me later, "The boys know what they're getting into. They just don't like admitting it." A telling game of Truth Or Dare found me asking Mr. Marbles what his most dehumanizing sexual fantasy has been. "Well I don't really deal in fantasy; I deal in reality, but the most dehumanizing thing I think I've ever done was, during a show I asked a boy if I could stick Baby Selena's handle up his butt, and I did, and there was some bluh-hd..."

The rest of the night was spent drinking cranberry-vodka concoctions and rewinding scenes of *Pink Flamingos*. Raymond would shout out lines along with the characters, getting louder and louder, saying one minute that "I'd better turn this down; the neighbors are going to call the cops" (this was 4 am), and the next minute turning it up, and again the minute after that, as if to compete with his ever-louder recitation of the script. The louder the TV, the louder his voice got, and the louder his voice, the louder

the TV got, until everyone from Penn's Landing to Penn Tower must've been scrambling to dial nine-eleven.

When I first met her, Connie didn't like me. Instead of speaking to me directly, she would ask Raymond "What did he say?" Afraid of the blade, I was refusing to do a show for them, and when he passed this message along, she replied, "Well, he knows where the door is then." They then reenacted (unbeknownst to me) the scene from *Pink Flamingos* where Connie is interviewing Miss Sandy Sandstone for the job of spy, throwing in little flourishes and ad-libs of their own to fit the situation, and maybe some thunderous bits of Revelations for good measure. This verbal assault had me so flabbergasted, I didn't know whether to throw them my wallet and run for the door or slip a cyanide capsule under my tongue and say a silent prayer to Saint Francis. All I could do was simply sit silently smiling. I can't remember now if they ended with that classic Connie Marbles line, "I guess there are just two kinds of people in this world — my kind, and assholes."

THE OFFER OF A LIFETIME, REFUSED

I spent many a night with them after that first one; going to clubs, witnessing fistfights and cat-fights, attending their parties. I still don't think they know my real name, though they admit I don't look a bit like Morrissey. "You just have his undefinable quality." Soon enough, it became clear that I was dutybound by the oath of my profession to record these two characters and their lascivious lifestyle, not only as a warning to the body politic of two menaces being on the loose, but as extreme examples of the facetious, self-loving niches that so many members of each generation take on as a matter of course. They were predictably overjoyed to hear I'd be writing about them. I almost feel like an accomplice going through with it; giving these attention whores exactly what they crave most.

The difficulty came when I wanted to get even the simplest of facts about their actual pasts. According to them, they met in Baltimore in front of the Harry Little Sub Shop in 1970 (long before their present bodies were born, I'd say), and had (last I knew) four babies, including Baby Selena, Frances Bean Cobain (who's cared for by her godmother Courtney), Coco Hayley Gordon-Moore, and one unidentified little

darling, pictures of all of whom are amassed on the computer and fridge.

The shows themselves seem like an ever-retreating fog, always just out of sight. One can't very well invite oneself over every night, but every time I visit it seems I've just missed or am just about to miss a planned or impromptu skin game. Their "crazy" friend Tina (everyone one in the world is crazy according to them, or as they put it, "a reeeecal lulu") will tell me in private that a boy came home with them from the bar, stripped down and walked around the room at their request, but foolishly tried to get her involved in the performance (stage fright?) by "almost touching me with his thing." As I'm leaving with the rest of a party a car will pull up to the sidewalk; Mrs. Marbles will chat with its passengers and I will overhear "Oh yes, you should come by and do a show for us later."

The show I put on for them was hardly a show at all, more like an afterthought one night as we were all about ready to fall asleep post-drunk under our respective covers. I had already made them promise not to shed any blood. After all, this is a city in which, as a friend of mine jokes, "you could catch AIDS just by rolling down the windows as you drive through." So I simply started taking off my clothes, thinking that this would be ideal subject matter for my night's Doogie Howser-esque journal entry. They put on a Peaches CD and urged me to dance along to "Fuck The Pain Away" as I stripped down to nothing, but deprived of their weapons they could do nothing but suggest poses, and titter gleefully through their clapping hands.

After I'd done this they gave me the greatest compliment of all; an offer to join them in the Marbles madness and become their butler, Channing, greeting their guests at the door wearing nothing but an apron. To this day I wonder if I made the right decision in turning this chance of a lifetime down.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Connie spends much of her time and energy online, in the web communities that make this trendy world go round: MakeOutClub.com, the TrackStarRecords.com Message Boards, etc., assuming yet more false identities for herself on top of the main one, and having them interact with the other anonymous players as well as each other, even going so far as to have one imper-

sonate the other and then argue about who's the original, or one defend the same person the other derides. In one poignantly schizophrenic thread, she scolded one of more of her own personae for insulting herself and another poster, saying "Would you say the things you say on here to his face? Highly doubtful. No, instead you have to hide your true identities behind an interface. I think you're all cowards, that need to get some serious help." And such are their lives, the layers of deception and split personalities piling upon and folding under themselves in a complex web of fraud.

But, buried under all their psychoses, their sadisms, fetishes and dually reinforced delusions, they are simply a couple of (not-so innocent) kids who took a movie much, much too seriously. Like most of the club-hoppers and scenesters you'll find by going to our city's bars, nightclubs and dance spaces any given weekend night, they found the real world much too boring or otherwise unsuited to their tastes, and hitched their butterfly nets to the first thing that promised an escape, or at least the outward appearance of having escaped. In a sense, they are much like the suburban youngster who quoted tirelessly from the scripts of *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *Wayne's World*, *Ace Ventura*, *Austin Powers* and of course the (surprisingly much tamer by comparison) counterpart to *Pink Flamingos*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Like the scrappy young lads who imitated Cagney, Wayne, Brando, Dean, Nicholson and Edward G. Robinson before them, they want not just to heckle or honor those they're imitating, but to take on their mystique, or lack thereof. It just so happened that these two picked two of the sickest, most depraved characters from arguably the most disturbing film on record that didn't get shelved under "hard-core porn" or "snuff film." There is one of the New American Dreams, that of self-actualization with a twist; becoming the ultimate version of someone else.

UPDATE

The ex-happy couple has now had a very public and celebrated divorce. Connie has run off to L.A., but Raymond remains at home, and retains his custody of beautiful bouncing Baby Selena.

MY NIGHT WITH RAYMOND & CONNIE

A tale of fancy drinks & innocence lost

BY LOREN HUNT

Raymond and Connie suggested that I meet them for "cocktails," which in this case meant beer, at their home, where I would be entertained in high style. I hung up and racked my brain for friends to invite and finally called Charlie, an old friend, very attractive, very plaid-shirt, and most importantly, a very good sport. The idea was to use him for bait. When I called a second time to ask permission to bring him, the Marbles were armed with a list of questions:

"Male or female?"

"Is he GAY?"

"Can we MAKE him gay?"

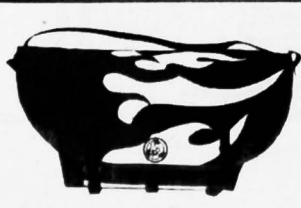
"If we don't like him, can we kill him?"

I had to provide a physical description, to which they responded with gleeful giggling and applause. I called Charlie back and gave him room to back out, since I had in fact told them that it would probably be pretty easy to make him gay although there would be no bloodshed. We went out and had a pitcher before going into the Lion's Den, having decided the whole thing would be much easier to face if we got a little "kittens" beforehand. Upon entering, Connie Marble was having a cat-fight with a friend who she later told us was a compulsive liar, going on to describe all the reasons why the girl who had just left was "nuts." It all seemed very normal and domestic. They were busy with their computer friends and cell phone calls, between which there was some polite conversation that didn't involve any mention of nudity, or cutting, however, Mr. Marble did turn on *Pink Flamingos* and scream along with all the lines.

Arriving next was Tina, another very normal, nice looking girl. Tina warned Charlie and I that she was going through a phase in her life where she just wanted to sleep with everyone, so not to be disturbed if she came on to one or both of us. Raymond Marble held court, discussing how he was trying to quit smoking. It was proving very difficult because he "Loves cigarettes. Loves smoking. Just loves all of it." Next he discussed the ocean and how "cathartic" it was to sit on the beach. He also showed us photographs of his friend who looks like Pamela Anderson, implying that although he likes boys, he wouldn't mind a roll in the hay with this particular friend. Another friend, who actually I recognized from the UArts staff, arrived and joined the party. At this point, Raymond began encouraging my poor friend Charlie to remove his clothing and give them a "show." Charlie sort of talked his way out of it, but the theme of the evening continued in the vein of "Get naked." I started asking questions about what the shows involve and Raymond turned up the volume on the *Pink Flamingos* video at the point where two of the characters were discussing exactly the sort of thing they do: the naked boys, the cutting, etc. I wanted to know what happened after they got people naked, and he said, "Oh, you know, they stand there and get embarrassed or some of them dance around a bit and we just take it from there." He also said that he and Connie had absolutely no interest in getting naked themselves, touching anyone, or being touched by anyone, they just liked to watch. The sex crazed girl started coming on to me, telling me she'd take off her shirt if I'd take off mine. Then she showed tits but I was basically just sitting there like, "Um... nice." Raymond finally got Charlie to drop his pants, then he dropped his, they compared abs, and it was over. I did get to see their "daughter," "Selena" the axe. They all passed Selena around, cradling her lovingly as if she was a real child. Connie Marble also showed me pictures of herself as a child and another picture of her "other daughter," "Frances Bean," who lived with her "grandmother." I didn't ask whether the toddler in the picture was actually her daughter, as in came-out-of-her daughter, because it seemed sort of impolite. Later all the females there convinced me to show them my tits, which I had said were "asymmetrical," which seemed to interest them. I felt like I was at summer camp all over again.



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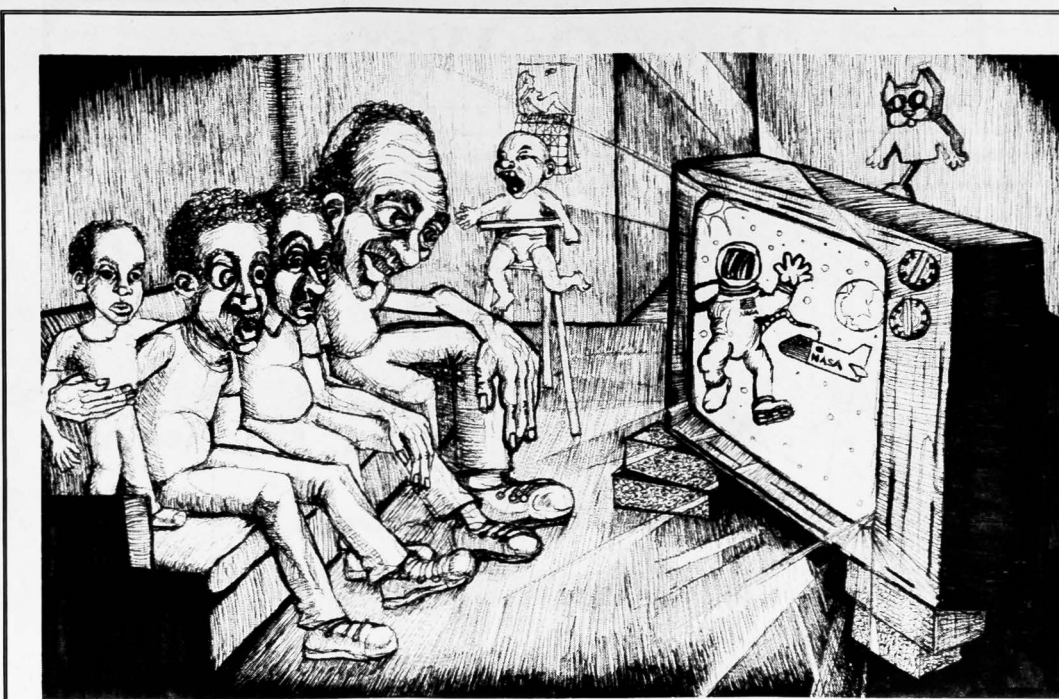
MUSIC, from page 5

other venues has tended to be overshadowed lately. But it is evident that our beloved Academy of Music will now be able to fulfill its true potential as home for the city's opera and ballet companies. I hope to comment on the Opera Company's *Don Giovanni* in my next report, and there have been a number of other highly impressive performances elsewhere. The two that I have enjoyed most were the local debut of the immensely gifted Artemis Quartet, presented by the Chamber Music Society in its old and still occasionally used quarters in the Convention Center, and an Academy of Vocal Arts production of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, cast with extraordinary vocal strength, if tiresomely gussied up by its stage director, which thrilled the audience at the Centennial Hall in Haverford on the night I saw it.

In the Kimmel itself, perhaps the most significant event to date, certainly for the Philadelphia Orchestra's faithful public, was the appearance of Christoph Eschenbach. The four concerts he led in early February were his first with the orchestra since his appointment to succeed Wolfgang Sawallisch next season as music director, and they could hardly have been more enticing as a taste of things to come. Here, unmistakably, was no routine concert, but a real occasion. Eschenbach began by talking to the audience in the most natural and appealing way about the music he was to conduct. That music included the *Second Symphony* by the contemporary American composer Christopher

Rouse (the recipient of one of the orchestra's Constitutional Commissions back in the days of Riccardo Muti's music directorship), who was also there to tell us about it. The orchestra played beautifully, producing, in Dvorjak's *New World Symphony* after intermission, some breathtaking pianissimos the like of which Sawallisch seems never to ask for.

Beyond all this, the plans recently announced for the new music director's subscription concerts next season include a work by a living composer in each of the five sets, not to mention performances of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and Schoenberg's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. If such a focus does not constitute nailing your colors to the mast, I don't know what would. The *Rite* provoked an audience riot when it premiered in Paris nearly ninety years ago, and still retains its capacity to shock; *Pelléas* represents a major step in a stylistic development that, for good or ill, dominated compositional methods through much of the 20th century. The newer works by our own contemporaries are, of course, gloriously unpredictable. Eschenbach is to be congratulated for his boldness, and the orchestra's management for supporting it. These are early days, but it looks as if the commitment to a living art that has been conspicuously lacking since Muti left ten years ago may be in for renewal. With it, the seemingly esoteric classical-music world could take on a new connection with the life of the mind in other artistic and intellectual fields, and a new appeal for the student generation that for too long has had



RYAN BENTLEY

every excuse for regarding it as irrelevant. Meanwhile, an immediate prospect is a program with guest conductor Sir Andrew Davis (on April 18, 19, and 20) featuring, along with the overdue local premiere of Vaughan Williams's radiantly visionary *Fifth Symphony*, the US premiere of *Quickening*, commissioned for the orchestra's centennial from the widely admired young Scottish composer James MacMillan. Altogether, it is an event not to be missed.

JACKSON, from page 4

original project - for an American to capture generic images of Americans - makes these photographs belong to all of us. On the other hand, we are outsiders, separated by time from these subjects. Examining the faces of dead strangers is like trespassing on someone else's history. Even the landscape itself feels haunted, looking artificially huge, empty of all the architecture that we have come to know

as familiar.

Unlike Berenice Abbot or Eugene Atget, whose projects of documenting the changes to New York or Paris have become landmarks of photographic arts, Jackson never set out to document anything, and was not taking these pictures to preserve on film some vanishing present. These images were made under expressly commercial premises, for mass reproduction, yet in time they have become art. Their craft (by which I mean composition,

lighting, use of space, view camera work, and technical skill) makes them deserving of "art" status, and so, strangely, does the passing of time. Like stamps or old furniture, they are items of utility which have evolved into vessels of human presence.

Lesy points out that these images excise far too much of society - crime, poverty, racism, labor - to actually reflect reality, but they are still a rare trove of historical information. Behind

ALL-STARS, from page 1

most other messengers is their willingness to take packages across the Schuylkill to the airport, a feat that involves crossing the George C. Platt bridge, the two-lane asphalt tightrope that connects I-76 and I-95. At least two other couriers - "Stago" and "Dweedles," of Timecycle can take the Platt, though neither has joined the All-Stars.

Usually couriers with cars are dispatched to take blueprints to office parks of Island Avenue and cargo to Lester. But the dispatchers know how the All-Stars lust for panoramic views and white-hot danger, so they get first dibs on Platt Bridge runs.

The arrangement also makes sense for the customer, according to Geller, who rides beneath the flag of Philadelphia Express.

"We're definitely faster than cars. We don't have to stop at red lights or obey traffic rules, and we have it easier getting around at the airport 'cause there's so much

security there now."

The bridge's pedestrian walkway has a perpetual coating of broken glass; resplendent in the fading evening light but decidedly unfriendly to the slick racing treads that the All-Stars favor. And so they bike along the edges of the bridge's roadway, sometimes against the traffic to avoid the perilous lane that merges into I-95.

"I used to take the bridge against traffic. I go with it now," says Geller. "It's kind of scary because cars are going 60, 70 miles an hour. When you get to the merge lane there isn't much of a shoulder. You have to gun it and try to make it before the cars do."

But even the shoulder's no cakewalk, says Peterson.

"Coming down the shoulder, I've seen every object that could possibly fall off a car, out there lying on the roadway. Hubcaps, car bumpers, Lazy Boy chairs, whole windshields..."

The rewards of a Platt Bridge trip are commensurate with the intense risks of the mission. While a normal intra-city run nets a courier about \$3, a trip to the airport can net an enterprising courier eight to ten times that sum.

But it's not about the money, and it isn't even all about running packages to the airport. It is less a self-selecting elite than a society of appreciation.

Acker: "The whole thing started when we took pictures of ourselves standing up there in the middle of Winter. We talked about having a barbeque up there. You can see the whole city."

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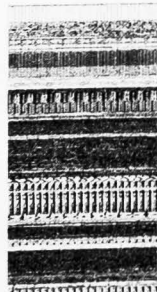
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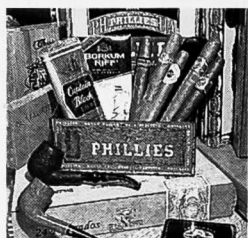


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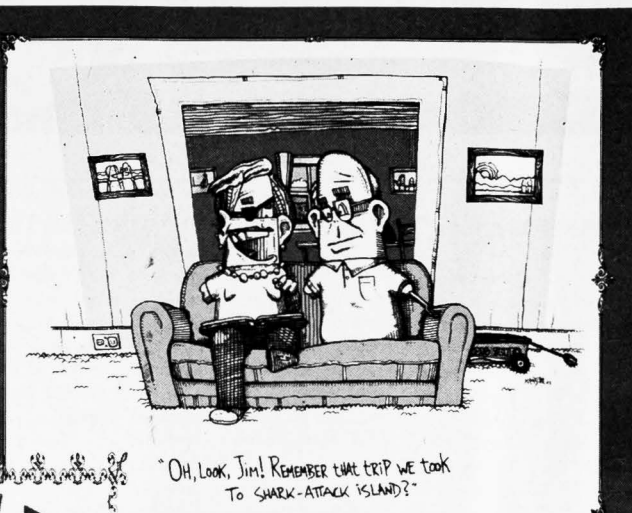
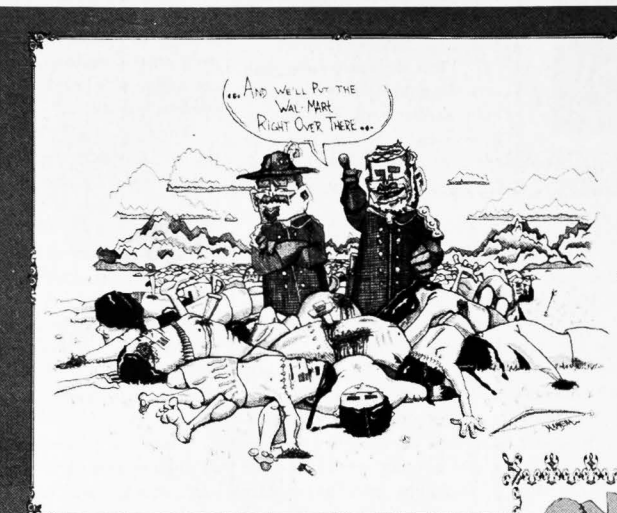
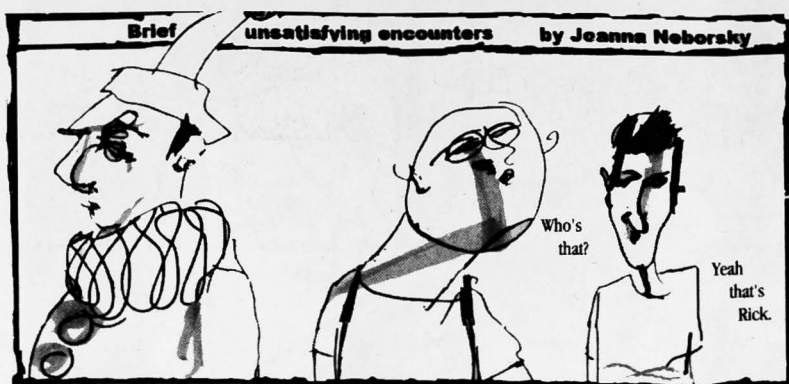


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A PERPLEXING PUZZLE FOR PRECOCIOUS PUPS

Oh My! Oh Dear! There has been a terrible earthquake at the Philadelphia Institute of the Mechanical Device! The tremors have loosed the placards from their places. Now nobody knows who invented what. Oh my. The Curator is almost back from lunch! The school children are coming! Quick! Match each inventor to their proper invention. GODSPEED!

by G.B. Treen

Jan Ernst Matzeliger

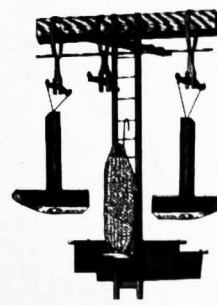
Amos E. Long & Albert A. Jones

Sybilla Masters

William B. Purvis

Samuel Scottro

Ben Franklin



Samuel Scottro held eight patents during his lifetime, including one for a mirror that allowed us to "see" ourselves as others see us, instead of backwards. He was born in Philadelphia in 1841, but left eight years later with his parents.

William B. Purvis invented a number of things, among them a new type of fountain pen. The Philadelphia resident received patent #419,065 on January 7, 1890.

Famous Philadelphia resident Ben Franklin invented many things, among them the Franklin stove which was revolutionary because it could be placed in the middle of the room, thereby allowing the heat to radiate in all directions, thereby heating the room in its entirety. (Franklin's design was improved by another Philadelphia resident received patent #419,065 on January 7, 1890.

Jan Ernst Matzeliger lived briefly in America. He revolutionized the field of shoemaking in 1883 when he invented a lasting machine for leather shoes that increased production for the average shoemaker from 50 shoes per day to up to 700.

Amos E. Long and Albert A. Jones, Philadelphia residents, received patent #610,715 from the U.S. government on September 13, 1898 for their invention of a new type of suction bottle cap.

Little-known Philadelphia resident Thomas Masters, who was mayor of Philadelphia 1702-1708, was married to a woman who was a member of the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch community. He was a member of the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch community.

THE ANSWER KEY

Found Photograph

Discovered, printed, and submitted by Molly Kalkstein





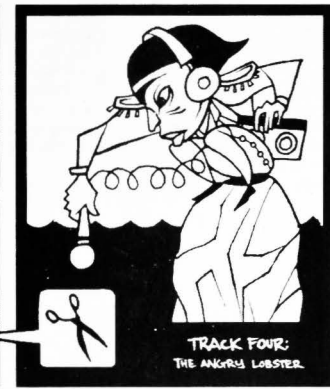
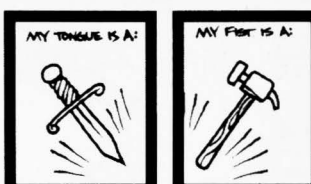
Introductions
-1-

*Tremendous Enthusiasm
In The Amateur Circus
(dreaming of his prowess)*



Matador Music
-3-

*If Only To Capture The
Scarlet Hordes - I Listen
(an inquiry into the reddish hue)*



Color Blind
-2-

*These Northern Stars
Are Scarabs In My Eyes
(a rude awakening for all)*

Chasing Misery
-4-

*Heark!
The Crimson Chorus Calls
(and you are changed)*

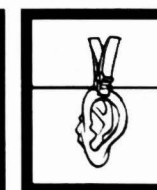
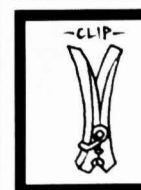
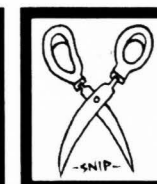


Oh, Paper Cuts
-5-

*As He Was Forewarned
(this sad index)*

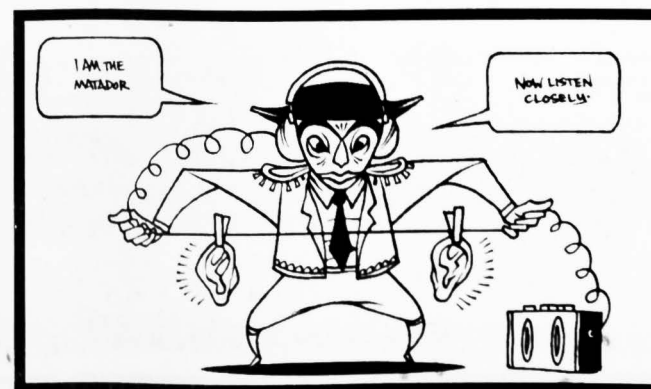
Last Rights
-7-

*A Prayer for the Afflicted
(without fail)*



Demise
-6-

*And In That Dawning Instant
(an ominous attraction)*



Application
-8-

*My Beloved,
The Matador Is Any Man Who
Is A Stranger In This World.
(let us rejoice)*

14 Sunday 15 Monday 16 Tuesday 17 Wednesday 18 Thursday 19 Friday 20 Saturday

The Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema continues this week. Tonight, check out *Southside*, 4:30pm at the Ritz East. I can't figure out what it's about, except that it has something to do with boxing, and we all love boxing movies, do we not? \$6. For all this week's listings, visit www.phillyfests.com.

Today we give the government what's theirs, but that doesn't mean we can't get ours in the meantime. While waiting in line at the post office, help yourself to free pens, stamp manuals, philatelic supplies, and navy blue Tyvek envelopes with slick-looking eagles on them. The last are especially useful for wrapping fish and insulating drafty windows. Hey, you paid for 'em.

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your Loeb. Get set for the *Time and Temporality in the Ancient World Conference*, which will roll through Penn's campus this weekend with all the fury of Hannibal at Zama! There is much free learning to be had, and free refreshments as well, beginning with Coffee at 8:30am Friday (followed shortly by a paper on "The Social Politics of Inception and Periodization.") and winding up with Refreshments at 4:30pm Saturday, the perfect way to follow up a talk on Metaphysical Leakage. Penn Museum @ 33rd & Spruce, Room 240.

Neal Pollack winds up his victory lap around these United States in his humble hometown, with Kurt Thornez and wee Jonathan Safran Foer in tow. The Free Library, 1901 Vine St., 7pm.

If you've still got some attention to pay after the reading, try *The Blank Music Festival*, with *The Inflatable Men*, Aim of Conrad, Sparrow, *The Heartache Disease*, Interpol, Sean Agnew, Major Taylor, and Dave P. The Locust Club @ 16th & Locust. About \$8.

Now sleep, after a highly boldfaced day.

Forty-eight hours of citywide rapture before the lumbering juggernaut that is *The Jai-Alai Savant* begins tonight, joined by *The Locust*, and *The Rah Bras*, at the First Unitarian Church, 22nd & Chestnut, 7pm, \$8.

They looked so cute on stage! Now's your turn to see *The Jai-Alai Savant* up close, playing cozy *DotDash Records*. 630 N. 2nd St., 8:30 pm.

Or if you've had your fill of the perilous *pelota*, the Secret Cinema screens the first six reels of *Paths to Paradise*, a silent film from 1925. In a twist worthy of Bergman or Wallace, no copies of the seventh, final reel survive. Don Kinnier will accompany the film on the keyboard. Moore College @ 20th & Race, 8 pm, \$6.

The Philadelphia Women's Society to Challenge and Abolish Miseducation (SCAM) presents "Hot! Live! Girls!" an evening with the city's lady d.j.s to benefit a grassroots counseling program for adolescent girls. Julia Factorial, Darshana, Chetana and others spin. The R.U.B.A., 414 Green St, Small cover, 21+.

You're in the middle of *The Great British Bike Weekend*, a three-day tribute to the trusty British three-speed. Stop by Trophy Bikes or Via Bicycle for more information, & visit the 3-speed swap meet tomorrow at 4th & Market, 9am to 3pm.

21 22 23 24 25 26 27

Like Rome 18 centuries ago, Kill The Man Who Questions, hometown punk rock pillars, must fall. This will be the final bastard for a band that fused anger and fun, intelligence and dancing, for the past five years. Sound of Failure, Del Cielo, The Great Clearing Off, and one-time KTMWQ vocalist Niki's new band, Negative fill out the matinee. 22nd & Chestnut, 1pm, \$6.

Today marks the beginning of "TV Turnoff Week." Instead of tuning into brave doctors, dashing handsome lawyers, and shows about nothing, why not give Fidget (also known as Ms. Erin Flowchart) a listen? With Goem, Freiband, Howard Stelzer & Jason Talbot. Tritone, 1510 South St, 9pm, \$8, 21+.

Now that Spring is here, maybe you should be spending more time on your roof at night. A bird's eye view of even the most mundane scenery is bound to thaw the worst case of melancholy. Fire-escapes are a close second. Sit on them.

Problem: You're a colonial magistrate who has just executed the village vagabond, and now you want to rub it in to teach his hoodlum henchmen a lesson, but the corpse is rotting away and will only be suitable for display, for what, another two or three days? Solution: The gibbet, a suit of iron bands that'll keep that body politic intact for weeks on end. Nail it above the courthouse! Walk it through the schoolyard! The gibbet makes one execution do the work of a dozen. You can see America's only gibbet at the Atwater Kent Museum, 15 S. 7th St.

The annual meeting of the American Philosophical Society starts today and runs through the weekend. It isn't easy to be elected to the oldest learned society in the country, but anyone can register to attend the symposia and lectures surrounding the meeting. Visit www.amphilosoc.org for more information.

And check out the Society's (unofficial) afterparty at Silk City. DJ Major Taylor spins Let's Get Buck Naked and F**ck. Around \$5.

The Secret Cinema screens two instructional films from the '70s and '80s in their Afterschool Special program. This is what I mean by two: "Mr. Gimme (1979)" - An actually warm and enjoyable story, of a kid who wants to buy a set of drums to play in his Beatles/Stallone/Andy Gibb-postered bedroom. To earn the money, he goes into business selling greeting cards, learning valuable lessons and wearing Kiss and Led Zeppelin t-shirts along the way. If the movies don't give you the snickers, free beer from the Victory Brewing Company should do the trick. The Print Center, 1614 Latimer St., 7:30pm, \$6.

Mecca Normal plays *DotDash Records* at 1pm. The Canadian band's tenth album will be released this summer, produced by Swearing at Motorists frontman Dave Doughman. 630 N. 2nd St.

Afterwards, stroll around the corner for a round of Quizzo at North 3rd. 3rd & Brown streets, 21+.

28 29 30

There really is no good excuse for not having a summer bike after today's BCP Bicycle Bazaar/Swap Meet, where vendors will wheel and deal the latest bicycle paraphernalia before the two-wheeled masses: all manner of cables, parts, tools, helmets, and other extras. Even those who already have bikes may want to check out the new talent on springtime parade, and hey, maybe start a little something on the side. Lloyd Hall #1 on Boat House Row. 10am-4pm.

Tonight, test your chops at the open poetry competition at Dirty Frank's to weigh in with your own verse, or join the crowd of celebrity judges and howl for your favorite. This bi-weekly Monday-night event is a great place of novice poets to try out their stuff in front of a forgiving, yet honest, mob of lushes. And you might just win a prize. 13th & Pine Reading starts at 8pm, sign ups at 7:30pm.

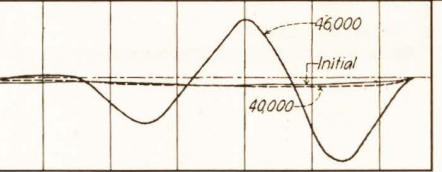
Paris-based expat writer (and publisher of the journal FRANK) David Applefield presents selections from his journals, stories of life in Paris, and talks about how to get published and pursue literary projects both here and abroad. Maybe he'll tell us about that time when he and Adam Gopnick sat around in their underoos watching WWF Smackdown and drinking Pabst. Kelly Writers House, 3805 Locust Walk, 2 pm.



APRIL

Sunday Monday Tuesday 1 Wednesday 2 Thursday 3 Friday 4 Saturday

MAY



Today, the Rosenbach Museum starts its *Ulysses in Hand* exhibit, the museum's first in its new building at 2008 DeLancey Place. Tomorrow, architect and historian Robert Skaler will give a lecture on his 4000-piece turn-of-the-century postcard collection. 7pm. Check out www.rosenbach.org for more lectures and events surrounding this promising exhibit, culminating in the annual Bloomsday reading on June 16.

Wandering about the Wissahickon near Hermit lane, you may stumble upon the Cave of Kelpius. Johannes Kelpius lived in this 40-foot square tablemacle with 40 monks back in the 1690's, hiding in the woods to spend the rest of the millennium in solemn meditation. Say hi for me, and tell the boys I need my hotplate back.

The Commonwealth is selling off its bridges for pennies on the dollar! Bridge aficionados have been snapping up the state's historic bridges, which has been trying to unload them since the end of the locomotive age. Visit the "Wanna buy a bridge?" section at www.dot.state.pa.us, but take care. This deal is strictly U-Haul.

The Bartram Meadow will be selling off herbaceous and woody plants, all of which have something to do with famed colonial naturalists John and William Bartram. Take Gray's Ferry Ave. west over the Schuylkill to 54th St. & Lindbergh Blvd. 10am - 4pm.

5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Urban life is indeed thrilling in its variety, but a lack of vigorous outdoor exercise can cast a pall over the heartiest constitution. Luckily, the warm weather will allow you to banish these sedentary demons with a constitutional. At dawn, set out towards the East with a day's provisions. Bed down on the turf at dusk, and sleep under the stars. Repeat, until you reach the ocean. Then treat yourself to some cotton candy. You've earned it.

Penn Treaty Park, where William Penn once signed some sort of treaty with some sort of foe, is today one of Philadelphia's most pleasant public parks. Its long-shot view of the Ben Franklin Bridge is unobstructed, perfect for reflecting on both the nature of time and why New Jersey, also plainly visible across the river, is the center of our world. Includes playground and ample grass for gaming. Delaware Ave., just north of Frankford, on the riverfront.

Descend into a marvellous Spring with a ride down the Giant Slide, a 12-foot wide, 60-foot high, wooden arc of fun. Fairmount Park near 33rd & Oxford streets. If today's sunny, you'll have to wait in line.

Tomorrow, Francis Fukuyama lectures on "Our Posthuman Nature: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution," his new book. Fukuyama's bestselling book "The End of History," was reprinted in 20 foreign editions. His 10 year-old son John is already a very promising new talent on the fiction scene, as evidenced by his tersely prophetic "The 9000 Alien Invasion," viewable on Fukuyama's faculty homepage. The Free Library, 1901 Vine St., 8pm, doors open at 7:15.

Aim of Conrad, The Deadly (ex-members of Kill the Man Who Questions, The Jai-Alai Savant, and The Harps play a benefit show for Philadelphia Women's Society to Challenge and Abolish Miseducation. The North Star Bar, 2639 Poplar, About 9pm, \$7.

Space 1026 holds a retrospective and group show, entitled "Scratch off the Serial." Look for a brick wall with legs, an airport waiting room, and 100 Philadelphia answers to the question "What would you if Osama bin Laden got off a bus in your neighborhood, carrying his luggage and looking lost?" 2nd Floor of the ICA @ 36th & Sansom, 6pm - 9pm.

This afternoon THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT's editors will leave their doors for the first time in months, to take in a bit of Rittenhouse sunlight and meet our readers. We'll be wearing little pinback buttons with the paper's flag on them. You're welcome to come out, say hello, and let us know your thoughts on the paper. Noon.

12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Barnett Newman shows at the Philadelphia Museum of Art until July 7th. Overlooked in his time in favor of peers like Rothko and Pollock, Newman is finally getting a show of proper proportions; this retrospective has more than 100 pieces and covers almost all of his working years. You've probably been wanting to go back to the PMA to see Cy Twombly's *Fifty Days at Ilium* anyways, and maybe today is that day. Benjamin Franklin Parkway and 26th St. Pricing varies, but a \$10 full-price museum admission will always cover it.

If you find yourself with a bike and plenty of time to kill (and you ought to have both, or set about getting them) try making your way out the suburbs and back on the Schuylkill River Bike Trail, which affords plenty of time for interacting with nature, secure all the while that shopping or eating in Manyunk is just up the hill. Head northwest up the Parkway past the Art Museum, then hug the Schuylkill up West River Drive. From there, it's best to consult the flip of a coin at each corner and milemarker until you are thoroughly lost.

Tonight, I'm going to purchase a delicious ice cream cone from one of the ice cream trucks that troll through our neighborhood at one in the morning. Those are ice cream trucks, are they not?

Sean and Abu spin old school hip-hop and reggae at Sugarbroom's. 225 Church St., Free. 21+.

At midnight, as on any Thursday, a ravenous and evidently underfed horde of pretzel-eaters converges on the Philadelphia South Pretzel Factory at 7th and Washington. While their numbers may shock you, these snackers, 30 or 40 strong, are known to be relatively friendly and good-natured despite appearances to the contrary. Of course, at a location where the pretzel supplies are cheap and abundant, four for a dollar from a seemingly tireless treat-producing machine, anybody with an appetite for dough and salt will ascend to high spirits. The factory opens most nights at midnight, but I'm told nights other than Thursday are decidedly less rowdy.

This afternoon get lost strolling down one of the city's handful of diagonal avenues, which slice up the grid and make things feel a little more like Europe. Baltimore, Ridge, Germantown, and Lancaster are all fine places to start.

Brilliant *New York Times* reporter and author Rick Bragg will read from his work and discuss privacy, memory and the memoir, along with four other writers of the memoir. UArts @ Broad St., Terra Building, 3pm.

